

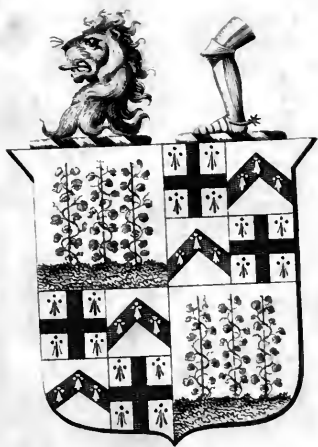
A

0009820507



SCIENCE REFORMA LIBRARY FACULTY

ia



John Archer Houlton.

SOUTHERN BRANCH,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
LIBRARY,
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.



LETTERS
FROM
THE MOUNTAINS.
VOL. II.

Strahan and Preston,
Printers-Street, London.

LETTERS
FROM
THE MOUNTAINS;
BEING THE REAL
CORRESPONDENCE OF A LADY,
BETWEEN THE YEARS 1773 AND 1807.

— — — “Memory swells
With many a proof of recollected love.”

THOMSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for LONGMAN HURST REES & ORME, Paternoster-row;
J. HATCHARD, Piccadilly;
And Mrs. COOK, Bury-street, St. James's.

1807.

82547

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

DA
880
H667
v.2

LETTERS

FROM

THE MOUNTAINS.

LETTER I.

TO MISS EWING.

Fort Augustus, June 10, 1774.

MY DEAR BELL,

I WILL make no excuses for having your two entertaining letters so long unanswered; but rather shew my gratitude, by giving you, as well as I can, some account of my late excursion, which has helped a little to divert the chagrin I felt at my ever dear Miss Ourry's departure. But I must thank you for your sincere sympathy with a grief, that to

VOL. II. B many

many would appear romantic or exaggerated, or might at best be considered as the result of a retired life, little acquaintance with the world, and the necessity which a weak mind feels of having some thing, or some body, to lean upon. She made my sorrow more excusable by seeming to feel, nay, really feeling, as much herself. Mine might be accounted childish, because I was, as you well know, womanly in appearance, while a mere child in years and judgment. But this was by no means the case with her. Had you but known her, you would be convinced that it is not merely the pleasure of agreeable society that I mourn over ; but that her mind was firm, rational, and enlightened, and her friendship a real benefit as well as honour to me. I know I tire you, but you must have patience, for you will hear a great deal more on this subject, if you indulge me in saying, as usual, what is nearest my heart, and uppermost in my fancy.

This is the best place in the world for cultivating friendship ; and therefore, in spite of all the privations to which it con-

demns me, I will love it ; because there is little to scatter the recollection of the days I wish to live over again, or to divert me from self-culture, the only object that now remains to me. Do you remember my mentioning an agreeable neighbour in one of my former letters, who lives a mile off, in a situation equally singular and beautiful ? I mean Miss Christina Macpherson. She is an acquisition in her way, sensible and sincere, though uncultivated. She possesses a fund of genuine humour : and I believe has a regard for me. With this agreeable companion I went down to Inverness in May, making a very pleasant and picturesque voyage down our fine lake in the galley.

I got your kind letter just as I was coming away, but delayed answering it till I could tell you something of my travels. We meant to stay but a few days ; but, betwixt kindness and contrary winds, were detained three weeks. Your extreme delicacy with regard to your Dunbar jaunt might be an example to me ; but I resolve to do good for evil, and carry you north,

though you would not give me an ideal jaunt to the south. Come with me then to the capital of the Highlands. The town is most agreeably situated at the very threshold of this rugged territory ; the mountains of which rise with abrupt grandeur to bound the prospect on one hand, the plain being of four or five miles extent, while a large bay of the sea limits it on the other. From the odd looking hill of Tommin-a-heurich, which rises in the middle of this plain, the fertile shires of Ross and Murray indulge the eye with a boundless view of gentlemen's seats, seated generally under the shelter of eminences, and surrounded with wood plantations, (for the gentry here are great improvers,) whence we overlook extensive fertile plains, and

“ Softly swelling hills,
On which the power of cultivation lies,
And joys to see the wonders of his hand.”

Yet, over and above the partiality which we are apt to contract for our place of abode, we found a sameness in that extent of lowland that did not compensate for the variety
afforded

afforded by our wild hills and winding glens. Besides, its north-east situation exposes it to such chilling blasts, as made us reflect with pleasure on the shelter we receive from our mountains; which are like some lofty and revolting characters, who appear stern and awful to strangers, but are all warmth and kindness to their own family. Yet I should like none of these climates, where

“ Winter lingering chills the lap of May,”
if I could help myself.

But to return to the said capital. It is somehow a cheerful looking place, because the people look cheerful; yet not flourishing, though no situation can be better adapted for the purposes of commerce. It has, however, a genteel society; and one meets with many well-bred, agreeable people. They have assemblies every fortnight, gayer than your Glasgow ones; which may be accounted for by their being attended by the neighbouring gentry, who are numerous and polite. These gentry too have many of them been abroad, in the army or otherwise, and thus add liberal notions and polished manners to the acute

and sprightly genius of the country. Their great distance from the capital often makes their provincial town the scene of their winter amusements. Nothing took my fancy so much there as the ladies. They are really, in general, showy, handsome women, excellent dancers, and have the best complexions I ever saw. Indeed you can scarce meet a young lady who does not remind you of the beauties in old romances. They have a great deal of flaxen air, a skin transparently fair, and cheeks like the opening rose. Yet their features are seldom regular or delicate, and their beauty is of that kind which vanishes with the bloom of youth. Their persons are large, and they are fat as heart could wish ; yet on the whole, they look cheerful and innocent. They certainly speak better English than most Scots do, but with a sharp imperative tone. They are very frank, and full of professions of kindness. - But I tease you with what perhaps loses all interest in my dull description. We had our share of adventures in coming home, some of them abundantly ludicrous ; but the minutiae would be more tiresome than

than Clarissa's, without being compensated by the same interest and fancy. We moralized, and wandered by ourselves in a most beautiful wood for two or three days, lodging at night in a great old chateau, where the servants were ordered to give us all we wanted. All this while we waited for a fair wind; we had no book or work. Christina sung like a syren to me, and I caught young wild ducks, which she tried to tame, while I gathered wild flowers. We began at last to fuffer

“ ‘The pains and penalties of idleness.’ ”

I held out better than she, having more rural taste, and taking more interest in trifles. We came up at last, by moonlight, in a boat. In the morning we landed at the sweetest place imaginable, the Laird of Glenmoriston's* seat; which delighted me so much with quietness and wildness, and

* Grant, of Glenmoriston; a family respectable for its antiquity, and estimable for genuine worth and simple manners; in whose hospitable mansion the spirit of true Highland cordiality loved to linger, surrounded by its attendant graces—ease, courtesy, and cheerfulness.

romantic environs, and hospitable easy people, and beautiful children, that I would describe it to you if I thought Inverness were not more than enough at once. I should need to have the Princess Schehersade's talents, before I could give you half our adventures. They ended, however, in the laird and lady kindly coming up with us, and spending a most agreeable day at my father's. I have only time to tell you, that I have heard four times from Miss Ourry, that I thought many times of you every day in the wood, and that I am proud of being two letters in your debt.

I am most affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER II.

TO MISS EWING, GLASGOW.

Fort Augustus, March 15, 1777.

MY DEAR BELL,

THE last hasty lines you had from me were so rapidly scrawled, that you would hardly make out the little meaning they contained. The sage bearer was on the fidget at my elbow the whole time I was writing it. I have been a good deal indisposed, great part of the winter, with colds, and your old enemy the tooth-ach. Now that I am better, I have a double enjoyment of every thing. You, who have the bustle of a crowded town, and a succession of amusements, to steal away the long dark evenings, must need wonder how we manage to get quit of them. Exiles as we are from the gay and fashionable walks of life, we fall upon wondrous contrivances to soften the rigour of the season, and

“Twine a garland round dark winter’s brow.”

You can form no idea of our multiplied resources, unless you were to pass a month among us. Reading, walking, and all speculative and solitary amusements, you well know, can be enjoyed here as well as in town. But you have no notion how townified folks are, in all these little garrisons ; and how these small circles, which necessity has driven together, ape the manners of the great world that they have reluctantly left behind. We too have our visits, our scandal, brought from thirty miles distant ; our tittle-tattle, our jealousies, our audible whispers, and secrets that every body knows. When any one marries within the county-bounds, we all sit in judgment, and are sure to find some fault with either party, as if it were our own concern ; and when any one dies within twenty miles, we are all very busy in sounding their praises, and contrive to rake a great many virtues from among their ashes, for which we never gave them credit till they were out of the reach of our envy. Then when Mrs. N*, or Madame le

* Mrs. Newmarch, daughter of Governor Tra-
paud, married to Captain Newmarch of the 7th,
afterwards

Commandant, receives any new article of dress, we all fly to admire it, and then hurry away to wash gausers, or in some other imperfect manner to contrive a humble imitation of it. Not to dwell on each minute particular, believe that our handful of antiquated beaux and rusticated belles just do every thing in the country that your's do in town, only with more languor and ill humour. People habituated to that manner of life, carry its follies and impertinences into the very bosom of tranquillity. When they walk, 'tis on the hard gravel road, to get an appetite ; when they read, 'tis some periodical matter, to dose away time till the stated card-party begins. These people always give me pain. They appear like fish out of water, gasping and struggling in a strange element. It provokes me, in a place where nature seems to reign paramount, enthroned in the centre of her sublimest retreat, and surrounded by her genuine children,

afterwards Major of that regiment. She was a pattern of conjugal affection, and domestic virtue.

dren, to see these insipid aliens insult her with their ennui. I mean no reflection on a town life, but merely to observe, that people, who have no resources within themselves, and aspire at no improvements, can hide their defects best in a crowd. I have been talking all the while of we and us, without telling you whom I meant to comprehend under these terms. We have, besides the old immovable set, an Officer of Invalids, and his wife and daughter from Edinburgh, who are ever pining for want of company they could ill afford to keep, and public places, which it would ruin them to frequent. They strive much to exalt our idea of their former consequence, by regretting that there are no noblemen's seats at a visiting distance, and that tumblers and rope-dancers never come this way. Then we have a pair who are a great acquisition; Captain Donaldson, of the 42d, an excellent officer and accomplished gentleman, who is also beloved for his worth and good-nature. He is married to a daughter of Colonel Gordon Graham, of the same regiment, who, till now, lived always in a gay circle of the first company,

but is wonderfully domesticated, and appears to be a good wife and tender mother.

. So, among all this groupe of originals, Mr. G.'s satirical wit, and D.'s dry humour, find abundant food.

. Alas! these Americans, ungrateful favourites of Heaven, not satisfied with throwing away the happiness they possessed supereminently, what public disturbance and private misery have they occasioned to others! And how do the remotest corners of this extensive empire vibrate with the shock of their calamities!—My cordial love to our H.

LETTER III.

TO MISS EWING.

Perth, May 6, 1777.

My dear soul, I would give any thing you knew the family in which I now am*. Your mind is fitted to taste the pleasure which angels may share with us; that of seeing a happy family living in love and harmony, and enjoying the heartfelt consciousness of living in the faith, and imitation of our Blessed Redeemer, with all the hope and comfort such a life inspires. Such is the excellent person whose tender care I now experience; and such are the children of her heart and of her prayers; the heirs of her humble piety and meek benevolence. Her eldest daughter† is certainly one of the worthiest of human beings;

* The family of the Rev. Mr. Black, one of the Ministers of Perth.

† Mrs. Bridget Black, afterwards Mrs. Bonnar.

THE MOUNTAINS.

and the ease and good breeding of the whole family would soon convince one that it requires neither constraint nor austerity to live *among religious folk*. How glad I am to have found out these *less than kin, and more than kind*, for they don't exactly know our connexion, and have the more merit in their attention. I can taste no pleasure without trying to share it with you. O, my true friend! how eagerly do my hopes fly forward to the time when we shall once more share every hope and wish together! Yet should this be denied, I would fain look forward with trembling hope to our re-union in that state, which excludes cares and wishes, yet excludes not——But I will avoid presumption, which must result from endeavouring to mingle, too fondly, the affections of this mortal state with our dim discovered views of the world unseen. — Did I tell you of an excursion to Scoon, which we made in company with a large party of the beau monde of Perth? I think I caught cold while contemplating the forsaken mansions of departed greatness. Yet I do not repent going; I love originals dearly, and anti-
quities

quities *vastly* : I was pleased too with a monument of conjugal affection in the chapel belonging to the palace. Lord Stormont, it seems, was first married to a foreign lady, who had the strongest desire to accompany him to Scotland ; but, dying abroad in he prime of life, she earnestly requested that her heart might be brought here, and deposited in his family burial place, that it might repose near to the object of her former attachment. It is deposited in a white marble urn, with a Latin inscription, expressive of her virtues and her lord's affection. I was pleased to think how good that heart must have been which could retain such warmth, amidst the frozen formalities and frivolous dissipation of a court.

LETTER IV.

TO MISS EWING.

Blair in Athol, Tuesday Morn,
May, 1777.

MY DEAREST BELL EWING,

HAVING written to Jenny this morning about my setting out, I must refer you to that letter for the motives of my journey. I found an honest man, whom I knew very well, from our place, driving an empty carriage north. My Robin is driver in ordinary to the Fort, and as wise and careful as a patriarch. I have passed a most agreeable day of solitary enjoyment. I travelled in silent state, without meeting a creature to interrupt my musings. I did not even read, but amused myself with my knitting, in up-hill roads. I did not speak a sentence till I had some necessary communing with my landladies, except getting the history of the famous battle, as I came through

through the pass of Killicranky. My Robin was very intelligent and distinct about the antiquities of the road. The singular beauty of the morning when I set out, and the satisfaction of getting my mind free from many doubts and fears that had hung upon me, with the hourly change of charming scenes, raised my late dejected spirits to a sweet serenity. I looked forward with pleasure towards home, the dear center of all social and rational happiness. The beloved friends I had left behind rose in my mind, not with the pensive parting look they usually wear to my imagination, but all cheerful and benignant; warm with the hopes of that re-union in which I have placed so much of my earthly happiness; the day arose with increased beauty, the scenery was enchanting, and all nature smiled around me. My mind had over-wrought itself before, and was now settled into a calm, and overflowed with pleasing reflections; gratitude to my friends, and gratitude *for* such friends, inspiring a sublimer aspiration towards the great original source of pure affections and intellectual joys.

I shall

I shall not go into a minute description of places you have heard so much of, but content myself with saying, that this day's ride afforded more noble and pleasing objects than ever I met with in the same space of time; for you must remember that I came southward through Breadalbane; so all this is quite new to me. The rich and variegated country you pass through on leaving Perth, forms a fine contrast with that gloomy barrenness, and those frowning heights, that mark the entrance to the Highlands, far more savage than the interior, where the green wooded vales, which open towards Dunkeld, relieve the eye, and the ear is soothed with the deep distant sound of streams, that "wander not unseen," through these dark retreats. Dunkeld has a singular air of romantic grandeur*, derived from its wild situation, the remains of antiquity round it, and the soothing gloom of its fine woods, which abound in weeping birch, drooping its pensile branches, and sighing to every

* The Cathedral of Dunkeld, though ruinous, is still a fine object: the Chancel and Choir remain, and still are used as a place of worship.

wind. These are contrasted by large solemn firs, that stand unmoved, in sullen dignity, amidst the fury of contending elements. You will think me very fanciful, investing plants with sentiment, but you may trust me when I assure you, I don't borrow from Harvey. The reverence I have for his character and intentions has made me often try to like his flowery style, but I never could succeed. I hope your efforts too, like mine, being, I am sure, equally sincere, may prove more successful. From Dunkeld you enter a wild, but not dreary country, in which the sun, looking upon Foscally "with farewell sweet," called my attention to "vales more soft than Arcady of old." The sweet winding stream of Argentine brought poor Struan to my recollection, with all his wanderings and hidings. If he were not such a sot, I should not think his life at all so unhappy as other people do. Poets have skill to complain, and, no doubt, feel acutely. But if their own imprudence, and the cruelty of the world, did not drive them into corners sometimes, they would neither muse nor warble, nor taste the sweets of nature,

nature, so peculiarly their own. And, in the bustle of the world, they would run all the risks other people do, without the common defences of caution and suspicion. Now this furnishes an excellent apology to the rich and powerful, for permitting the ingenious and highly-gifted children of nature to languish in obscurity ; and accounts for their letting them starve in corners, while they themselves choose their associates among those whom delicacy and sensibility shrink from ; the dull, the callous, and the servile. I am growing ill-natured, and should have been better employed in telling you what a fine twilight scene this other princely seat of the Athol family forms, at this moment, opposite my window——

“ But now the fairy vallies fade,
Dun night has veil'd the solemn view ;
Yet once again, dear parted *maid*,
Meek Nature's child, again adieu !”

LETTER V.

TO MISS EWING.

Fort Augustus, July 26, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

GOVERNOR Campbell's * family left this place on Monday, and we are all very melancholy ; for we never shall see the worthy old veteran more. He has a complication of disorders, one alone of which would be enough to make life miserable. It must be so, and the world could not go on otherwise. Yet one, unused to such scenes, cannot avoid surprise to see how those we love best can divert themselves, and be very merry, while we are in agony. I suppose I was more affected than other people, merely because the scene is new to me.—My poetical correspondence, after which you inquire so kindly, has been some time in a

* Governor Campbell, of Fort George, who represented the family of Barcaldine : he died at Bath soon after his visit to Fort Augustus.

declining

declining state, and is dying, if not already dead. It did not begin with me, and I think it will end with me. I wish I had kept copies for your amusement; but I have not, as yet, set so much value on any thing of my own writing, as to preserve a duplicate. This indifference is not affected. I do not give myself airs of despising poetry; on the contrary, I not only love but revere the Muse, as believing her the Priestess of virtue. Her sacred and boundless influence over the heart and the imagination, may, properly used, produce the happiest and noblest effects. Witty and profligate poets have, no doubt, perverted their talents to the worst purposes. But this only affects their contemporaries, for I do not believe they are ever read by the next generation. In the public opinion they rot and corrupt with their writers. Who cares now for the wits of Charles the Second's day?—or who would wade through their dunghills? But truth and nature are for ever new and delightful. In all the vicissitudes of time they hallow and preserve the very language in which they are written. Whoever is capable
of

of being delighted by poetry, sees nature and virtue in fairer lights and brighter colours than others. But that reverence for the Muse, which arises from a conviction of her divine origin and boundless influence, makes me touch the lyre with a trembling hand. Indeed in my own case, as well as others, I feel a dread and remorse, as if writing without genius were something akin to prophesying without inspiration. But in this playful way of writing, merely for each other's amusement, which one may call rhyming conversation, I feel less reluctance, because I know it is to die in the little circle where it was born.—Adieu, my dear friend; send me fire-side intelligence, my chief delight.

LETTER VI.

TO MISS EWING.

Fort Augustus, August 10, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WOULD willingly convey a share of all my pleasures to you. But then I fear you will have a bad bargain, by taking my pains into the account. Now I have a knack of adding other people's to my own stock, which will give you very little profit of the transmission (may I call it) of my few wild, simple pleasures. You inquire of Mrs. C.* But for the small-pox, she would have been very handsome, on a large scale. As it is, she is very comely, and possesses uncommon powers of pleasing. There is a masculine strength and dignity visible both in her figure and understanding. But she mingles such perfect ease, pliant attention,

* Mrs. Campbell, sister to Sir John Sinclair, of Ulbster, married to the Governor of Fort George, and mother to the Countess of Caithness. She died many years since.

and constant good humour with her dignity, that you respect her without being overawed. Her language is pure and elegant, and gives the idea of a woman of fashion, without the modish phraseology. Then you can easily discern that though she lives in the world, and knows it, she thinks her own thoughts, and expresses them in her own words. . . .

“The world is frantic—fly the race profane !”

How often does this quotation occur to me, when I see the struggles of vanity and avarice, and mark the end ! Yet will these votaries of the world go on crying, “We are the people, and wisdom shall die with us ;”—and they look upon us that love peace, and would eschew it, as poor visionary recluses, without any desirable object of pursuit. I could find in my heart to give them back their pity with interest, and daily relish more your happy project, of being doubly blest in our single blessedness, in that same air-built cottage behind the hill. If we are as happy in it as we were last winter, we may think our lot enviable. Indeed the incursions of the husband and bairns, which Jenny resolves to have, will now and then disturb
our

our tranquillity ; but when they are gone, we shall put on our spectacles, and contemplate our lap-dog and parrot with new delight. Talk of social ties and endearments, I am sure I get enough, and too much of them, without being bound in ties never to be broken. I wish I could make you sensible how close the ties of neighbourly kindness necessarily draw, in these little places. Every one that is sorry solicits your sympathy, and every one that is sick claims your attendance, if it is supposed you have any kindness to spare. Their distrusts and quarrels with each other make every one fly to me with complaints against each other. This new-married lady at C. too has taken a most inconvenient fancy to me ; and, like all other indulged invalids, cannot bear to have any of her fancies crossed : and so violent is her kindness while it lasts, that, betwixt her, and one drooping soul or other, Mary Gwynn not the least nor last, my very spirit is worn down with attending sick folks. Miss M'Culloch's sister bears heavier on my mind than any one of them. She is left by herself, her father and mother

being gone to some medical wells, where, I fear, the good primitive man will die. I never passed such a confused summer ; and my poor Christina Macpherson, that used to cheer my soul “ with songs divine to hear,” must be away too ; and poor Pastor Fido*. The sweet evenings, and bright silent noons, that we three were wont to spend in tracing up Tarfe, and wandering and lounging by turns on *Drimen Duie*, with our whimsical broken starts of conversation, as detached from the rest of the world, and as unlike it as the kids that played over our heads, rise to my memory like the music of other times. I would not grudge the absence of this nymph and swain, if they were as happy where they are ; but I am sure they are not. When shall I again dwindle into my dear insignificance?—A thousand things used to charm me when my mind was vacant and easy, which I cannot relish now that these restless beings have disturbed me,

* Pastor Fido—a *nom de Guerre*, given to the companion of our walks ; he was afterwards Minister of Laggan ; and was then just gone to settle there.

by making me the depository of their self-created troubles. This it is to live so plaguy near people, and meet with them continually; though neither estimable nor amiable, they get hold enough of one's affections to make one uneasy. Factions in miniature are like a swarm of muskitoes; they can't kill you, but they tease you incessantly, buz about your ears, and hinder your sleep. I wish I could communicate to them some of our "rapture for the Muse," to cure them of slander and captiousness. When I am czarina of some new discovered region, one of my first edicts shall be, that every one of my subjects, who is incapable of being amused in a rational and elegant manner, shall work hard from morning to night. And in this regulation I will consult the happiness of my said subjects,

"Nor let their everlasting yawn express
The pains and penalties of idleness,"

I have now in my eye a person of plain common sense, and much humanity, who, without a grain of literature, a scruple of taste, or an atom of fancy, contrives to be as busy as a bee, and as cheerful as a lark.

The whole year round she rises early, regulates her family, and then sits down to work and to sing. When her own work is done, she works for her poor neighbours ; does not care a straw whether she is praised or they are thankful, but goes on with the pure motive of doing good ; without any gratification in view, but the mere joy of seeing the poor children look well in their new clothes. Thus she goes on. Never inquires what others are doing, unless she can help them ; and never goes out of her usual routine, unless there is something unusually good to be done. And all this costs her no effort :

“ Her duties walk their constant round,
Nor make a pause, nor find a void.”

“ If I was not Alexander, I would be Diogenes,” said the hero of Macedon. If I were not “a muse-rid mope,” I would be this serenely happy being, saith your friend. You see what rural pleasures I am like to enjoy. Will. Houston, sitting behind the counter between his day-book and his bible, tastes the sweets of summer more than I do.—“ Daughter of winding Clutha ! walk forth

forth in the light of thy beauty, among the waving willows of Duchnafall. There let the breeze sigh among thy heaving locks, while thy white hand, thrown over thy trembling harp, awakes the memory of joys that are past. Then, in the bright stillness of noon, while the hunter pants wearied in the shade, and no sound is heard along the desert heath ; let thy sister, who mourns solitary in a distant land, visit the musings of thy secret soul !” Think of me, who have not, since I came home, walked beyond the garrison or village, except indeed to Culachy *, and that was always in *quick time*. I have not once seen my Pensive Grot, nor been in Thicket Island. My rural enjoyments are confined to a twilight or moonlight walk under our own trees ; and there, indeed, I resume my wonted pleasure of contemplating the calm bosom of my own lake, the purest of mirrors, exhibiting a prospect awfully solemn and

* Culachy—the place of residence of Christina Macpherson ; a beautiful farm, romantically situated at the opening of Glen-tarfe, about a mile from Fort Augustus.

wildly magnificent; while the mountain tops seem sleeping on its surface.

“ In truth, I am a strange, and wayward wight,
Fond of each dreadful, and each gentle scene.”

In this favourite scene of my meditations, many a glowing and pensive sigh is devoted to you. There, with other associates of my early days, your image comes full upon me, and I indulge in reveries that end in pain. Farewell, friend of my solitude!

LETTER VII.

TO MISS EWING.

Fort Augustus, Sept 21, 1778.

MY DEAR SOUL!

I HAVE been very agreeably engrossed for some days past. You know how closely Mrs. Sprot and I drew to each other, from similarity of taste and sentiments. She has corresponded with me since she came to Urquhart, and twice attempted to come up, but was somehow hindered.—A week ago I
was

was confounded at receiving a letter from the *wee* advocate : Jenny will tell you who that is. I demurred upon the occasion, with modest hesitation, and opened it with consternation, and no little trepidation, which caused a small palpitation ; for I dreaded a declaration, too bold to be made by any in the nation, to merit that needs no more elevation, in a maid whose bright graces illumine her dark station. But I found my mistake on more near observation ; so, being ashamed of my supposed penetration, I saved my vanity by an evasion ; and imputed his silence to deep veneration, which often accompanies great admiration. Were I not afraid of the imputation of pedantic affectation, I could make this clear by a learned quotation from M. T. Cicero's fortieth oration ; therefore, upon due deliberation, being moved by your vexation, beyond any other consideration, I must resume the thread of my narration for your further edification, and my thorough vindication, which concerns you as much as any relation ; for scandal, you know, spreads like an inundation, and even your prudence

and my moderation cannot always silence a false imputation, which would at least raise our indignation, though we bear greater evils with calm resignation. So be sure to exert yourself for my justification whenever you hear me blamed in mixed conversation ; mention my virtues with great exaggeration, and my faults, if I have them, with some extenuation ; for even vices admit of some palliation, except when they rise, by a fatal gradation, to a climax beyond all alleviation. A friend should never attempt aggravation ; for though we live among a perverse generation, each of us may keep peace in our own habitation, and, by lying in bed, to escape observation, become worthy patterns for general imitation, and not sleep in the face of a whole congregation, which would afford Andrew great delectation. So I conclude, in hopes of your full approbation, for I am sure you must be tired of so many long words in rotation, as you always delight in concise abbreviation, as much as I do in fluent and diffuse narration, &c.—Well, but this letter from our *wee* friend meant nothing but to recommend to our attention the two brothers

brothers Sprot ; one, my acquaintance through his mate, who, by his worth and engaging manners, can always recommend himself ; the other, a bachelor brother of his, who is newly come home from India, not at all like his brother, but I believe a good kind of man. The brothers and the lady came purposely to spend a few days with us. We enjoyed each other exceedingly, and should have done so much more, had not other company interrupted us. Mrs. Sprot improved upon me greatly ; like Swift's Stella, she has lived in a circle of men and books, and has acquired certain peculiarities, from so doing ; yet she has a great fund of good humour, and has a spirited ease in her manner that is very pleasing. She possesses genuine sentiment, and great sincerity ; has a warm heart, and an excellent taste, which appears in her dress, furniture, books, &c. but more especially in her friends,—I was going to add, in her husband, but she, more properly, was his taste. I forbear to tell you how modest and amiable he is. I content myself with observing, that I never saw a husband whose behaviour to a wife

pleased me so well. They would have induced me to go with them to Fort George, where I had promised to go on a visit to Mrs. Campbell *, but I could not, being the week of our sacrament, which shortened their visit.

* * * * *

Sept. 21st is come, and I have not gone to Stratherick, having been agreeably prevented by a visit from a cousin; not P. but a married cousin, a great favourite. He will stay some days, which I rejoice at: I dearly love my relations when they are tolerable, and would fain blind myself when they are not. I have got much information from him with regard to our mutual friend, who continues to roll a stone up a hill with the usual success. He, indeed, seems born to a froward fate, if indeed it is not rather his folly than his fate. His late adventures are as singular as himself; but I will not swell this overgrown epistle with them. You ask if ever he and Pastor Fido met? He was a month here at the very time P. F. was in the gloomy humour I told you of;

• The wife of the then Governor of Fort George.

and

and their behaviour to each other was so haughtily cold on one side, so saucy and biting on the other ! One never unbent from his haughty reserve, so far as to cast a glance at any of the kindred, only, on going away, he would look back to see if I were alive after all this ; the other spared no reflections, and would barely allow him the advantage of a tolerable exterior ; and was out of patience when I assured him P. F. wanted neither good sense nor good nature, though he did not think proper to spoil them with daily wear. At that time P. F. would think it beneath his dignity to rail at any one, but shew his displeasure by a disdainful silence, when the object of it happens to be the subject of conversation.—I rejoice sincerely to hear of our dear Harriet's speedy recovery. The world cannot have too many like her, if her children resemble her.—I am truly sorry that your friend has thrown herself away on such a trifle. She always encouraged a train of coxcombs ; I never saw a person of so much sense so little jealous of her dignity. Adieu, dear friend !

You in my thoughts, I repeat the five first

verses of the twentieth Psalm, which you pointed out to me when I came away—

“ O’er all my soul your sacred influence breathes -
Inflames imagination, raises thought,
Infuses every tenderness,” &c. &c.

LETTER VIII.

TO MISS EWING, GLASGOW.

Fort Augustus, October 3, 1778.

I HAVE now to thank you for two of your kind letters since you returned from the Fairley ; but, before I advert to their contents, will carry on my narrative as usual. The day I sent you my last, I received one from Inverness, with an account of poor Mr. Mac C.’s death, which is a loss to society in general ; but to this place, as well as to his own family, irreparable. He was a man of primitive simplicity of manners, and undeviating rectitude of principle ; and discharged the duties of his useful
though

though humble station with peculiar diligence and fidelity, and was indeed the principal bulwark of religion in this place since poor P. F. left us ; for our present pastor does not reside. Well, but I was desired to communicate to the poor girls the loss they had sustained. I can give you no idea of the terror I felt at being forced to perform this task. Yet the scene was even beyond what I had feared. The widow was at the wells where he died ; so the poor souls were in a house by themselves, in a lonely place, half a mile from the village, where scarce one of our circle had the humanity to go near them. Our family, and that at Culachy, were indeed the only exceptions. The pretty gentle creatures have so much sensibility, (how that poor word is hackneyed !) “ that they really cannot bear such scenes of distress ; ’tis too much for their feelings, sinks their spirits,” &c. So they prudently avoid every thing that can awake in their hearts those emotions which certainly result from salutary impressions, and produce the best moral effect. The divine pattern of every excellence, who was a man of sor-

rows,

rows, and acquainted with grief, set no such example.

“ O for the sympathetic glow,
Which forc'd the holy tear to flow,
When, weeping over friendship's grave ;
Ev'n he forgot his pow'r to save !”

My dear love, I beg you will join with me in despising this selfish sordid kind of sensibility, for I am just now particularly angry with it. Dear soul, your too recent experience will teach you to judge, though others cannot, of the anguish and despair that overwhelmed these poor orphans. Poor indeed ! for their whole dependence was their father's exertions. But they have a good and generous brother ; and, what is better still, they have their father's good works, his prayers, his example. They will not be left desolate. I never behaved worse ; I had, I thought, resolved, and fortified myself in the best way I could, but in vain. Indeed the scene was new to me. I never witnessed one of the kind ; and it was the worse that I liked the poor sufferers so well. I wrought myself up to a forced composure ; but when I told, as
softly

softly as I could, what every one else knew, the violence of their anguish was overpowering. I went up twice every day since to assist with their mourning, &c. but got so much cold at last, with walking in wet weather, that I have been feverish and confined since ; but I am beginning to mend. I will not plague you with a detail of petty grievances, but tell you, in general, that I have been teased and plagued beyond sufferance with people of a very different description. - - - - - To bear our share of the sorrows of our friends is a duty we are born to ; we are the better for it. But to be worn out with the follies and absurdities of those who are incapable of friendship, is truly hard. Were I to wish myself any thing but what I am, it would be a hedge-hog. Happy brute ! that can be all collected within itself, and there lie wrapped, indifferent and insensible to all that passes without. I have seen human hedge-hogs ; but these I do not envy, for they never unroll themselves. Now the genuine hedge-hog only does it occasionally, when it runs the risk of being injured ; and

so would I. I suppose you have heard me speak of the brother of the new-married lady at Culachy *, who, at a very early age, and in the most honourable manner, has made a fortune in India. He is an uncommon, indeed I may say, an exalted character ; one of those of whom Pope says,

“ Great souls there are, who, touch’d with warmth
divine,

Give gold a price, and teach its beams to shine.”

I know you agree with me in taking a strong interest in valuable and singular characters, though not personally known to them. I shall give you a slight sketch of this estimable person’s history : He has just left us, and is to return, on his way from his native island, to visit his sister ; and we are daily entertained with anecdotes of him. His history includes his character. In the first place, he was the son of a worthy clergyman of the Isles, distinguished for his learning

* The person here mentioned is a well known and much esteemed character ; who, after this period, succeeded to the interim Government of Bengal, on the return of Governor Hastings to England.

and abilities, and whose writings have thrown great light on the antiquities of his country.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Now this is as pretty as fiction, and as true as history. It is inconceivable what good these small pensions, so judiciously distributed, have produced. They have cheered dejection, enlivened hope, and supported industry. Here is a man that makes more than a dozen families happy, at less expence than half a contested election would occasion. These small sure streams of bounty, that never dry up, do people more good than a large sum, which would put it in their heads to be proud and idle, and sit down to hatch imaginary wants. Whenever a shower of gold falls upon me, I certainly will go and do likewise. His wealth, the reward of scientific service, as one may call it, to a native prince, was not got in the common manner, and is just as uncommonly spent. Two hundred pounds, which he sent to be distributed among the poor of his father's parish, I had almost forgot to mention. Ad-
vert, that this is not done from the overflow-
in .

ing of an immense fortune ; he is not rich in the Eastern acceptation yet. But, as Burnet says of Tillotson,

“ He is rich in good works.”

Excuse repetition and confusion. I tell you once more, the people hereabouts tease and harass me with their hollow friendship and undesired confidence ; civilities that demand a return, and would extort gratitude, where there is neither principle or steadiness ; and to devote your time when you cannot give your esteem, and then to have the only estimable person in the whole groupe injured and neglected by the rest ; to see that estimable person sinking under a secret load of heart-breaking sorrow, which I cannot alleviate, and must not seem to know : how vexatious ! My dear creature, you know nothing of the strife of human passions. 'Tis here they rage and swell, and are seen in their full magnitude. Confined to a few objects, and within a narrow circle, their agitation is more violent, and their effects more visible. From the dreadful effervescence of idleness and malignity fermenting together, may all I love be preserved !

The

The last is a most profound and mysterious period ; but if I ever see that blessed sight, your face, I will give you a very full explanation of it, which will make you wonder at least, if not cross yourself. I turn to a more pleasing subject, the contents of your letters. I am glad you were so well entertained at the Fairley by my old acquaintance Clarissa, and your new acquaintance Mr. Monteith. I observe you frequently preferred the company of the former to the latter, and am pleased to find you so partial to my favourite heroine. Never, sure, were characters so well drawn, discriminated, and supported as those in “ Clarissa.” Her own in particular. Never was any thing so uniformly consistent, so raised above common characters, and yet so judiciously kept within the bounds of nature and probability. I know very well there are those who, from a very indelicate species of delicacy, object to the conduct of the story in certain instances. Those who can, in the midst of such distress as her’s, withdraw their minds from contemplating the trials of a suffering angel, to pollute their imaginations,

tions, are very unworthy indeed to be admitted into even the ideal presence of a Clarissa. I know not any criterion by which I should be readier to judge, and try, any one's character and taste, than by observing with what degree of interest and feeling they survey this correct drawing from nature. You cant' think with what scorn I listen to little misses, and *very little* masters, who tell us in parrot phrase, " Nobody reads Clarissa now. People *now* think it languid and tedious." Just as if the effect of good sense, wit, humour, pathos, and, in short, pure christianity, could vary with the hour, like fleeting modes and manners. Ranting tragedies, written while rant was fashionable ; or vile comedies, where wit and talents are lavished in painting manners which happily no longer exist—these, I say, may go out of fashion ; but truth is immutable, and nature, if you will bear a quibble, has invariably the self-same variations. Who then would affect to despise a clue that leads through all intricacies to her inmost recesses, because the thread of which it is composed is very fine, very long, and artfully twined
of

of many filaments? The means are proportioned to the end. The story, no doubt, unfolds slowly ; yet every sentence answers the great end of bringing the actors in the scene so immediately before your eyes, that you seem to have known and lived with them. The approach is long, but it is to a noble object, and the avenue is planted with such endless variety of flowers, both pleasing and useful, that you must be dull and incurious indeed, if you stop or linger by the way. I know nothing, out of the volume of inspiration, equal to the death-bed of Clarissa. I feel the effect always new ; wrapped in the delusion of this overpowering fiction, I have dreamed, as the Patriarch did at Luz, that I saw angels ascending and descending. Generally in every story, real or fictitious, the interest ceases with the life of the hero or heroine. But, in this instance, we hover over the vault, and trace every circumstance relating to the departed saint, with fond veneration. Yet, after being so partial to our own sex, as to allow Clarissa to be a natural character, we may be so just to the other, as to suppose Love-

lace carried almost beyond possibility. A man could not exist, who, to so fine an understanding, such courage, wit, generosity, and talents, could unite so much cunning and cruelty, folly and villany. Yet the author has so far preserved probability, as to make him act and speak as such a being would do, if any being could unite such contradictions. Modern history indeed refutes my wise conclusions, by presenting us with an almost similar character, Lord Bolingbroke, whom Pope distinguishes by the epithet of all-accomplished St. John. He addressed his Essay on Man to him, and speaks of him on all occasions with the most enthusiastic admiration. Swift does almost the same; and Chesterfield, who only saw him in extreme old age, when he might be thought to have outlived his talents and his graces, was yet dazzled with his person and address, talks of him as the complete model of a finished fine gentleman, as to manners, conversation, and eloquence. Yet this man, after running into the most violent excesses in libertinism, and prostituting his fine talents to serve the meanest and most corrupt ends

of a party, without reforming from his innate vices, had turned them into a more dangerous channel, by endeavouring to undermine those principles which the tenor of his life had disgraced. Yet he had, after all, the art to persuade even the virtuous Pope, and that all-observing cynic Swift, of his sincerity and rectitude; and this merely by the force of eloquence, shining parts, and a kind of constitutional something, that passed for generosity and good nature. Thus, without a heart, without truth or morals, this man was enabled to captivate and do mischief, not only all his life, but even after death. The deistical writings he left behind were not the result of self-conviction, or a desire to convince others, but the mere vanity of exploring the trackless wastes of speculation, of overthrowing established opinions, and thus creating a region in which to rule. It was like Satan's expedition in search of some domain, where he might exercise power, and produce misery. I do not know what tempted me to wade so far out of my depth after Lord B., but you wish me to say all that comes in my

VOL. II. D head,

head, and you must take the consequences.
Farewell, affectionately !

LETTER IX.

TO MISS EWING, GLASGOW.

Fort Augustus, Nov. 14, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter from Stirling is not arrived. I have desired this bearer, who passes through that ancient city, to call for it, and send it by Edinburgh. 'Tis very childish to say that the perusal of your letters makes so much of my happiness ; but in this deserted place there is so much mistrust, so much serious trifling, such a dearth of the language of truth, of nature, and the affections, that they are " the sunbeams " of my soul, and I count the intervals between them impatiently.

I must pique you into punctuality by telling you I have a more witty and eloquent correspondent. Tho' I cherish your " retir-
ing

ing softness" with perverse preference ; I am tempted to transcribe some original poetry from her last letter, because 'tis the prettiest I have seen her write, and not because I am the subject. Read this " Address to Memory."

* * * * *

Our *Drimen Duie* friend is still indisposed : what if he should walk off to the Elysian Fields without ceremonious leave taking ? I think it were as well to take the Female Quixote's way, and send him word that he may live if he pleases. If raillery could relieve anxiety, it were well ; and if diseases in real life would yield to the sympathy of friendship, it were also well. I keep my indignation at all the offenders here within very moderate bounds ; for I only preserve my serenity ; that is, when they would be jocose, and familiar, as formerly, I look grave, and pretend not to understand them. For Mrs. Newmarch's sake, I carry my righteous wrath no further.—Why do you desire me to burn your letters, while you so religiously preserve mine ? You can have

no motive for this, which I have not in a higher degree for keeping the pictures of your soul. I have cut all the leaves out of a great old goose of a book, and there I have placed those pretty pictures in regular succession ; with Miss Ourry's, and Mrs. Sprot's ; cousin Jean's letters, which I value much for the vein of original-humour that runs through them, are there too : so are some of Beattie's poems. You can't think how diligently I peruse this good book. Watts on the Passions is not dearer to you ; for, as warm as he is in your workbag, do you think your paper bag of epistles can ever lift its head in competition with my great book ? No ; it has too much respect for its betters, and has learnt from me the doctrine of gradations. To counteract the vile influence of the vile world, I am always sending you some true story of good deeds perform'd, or good souls acting or suffering, from my Alpine nook. (I don't mean the Fort.) Did you ever know so good a creature as Sandy the primitive ? See now, he insists on his mother and sisters coming to live with him, and means to support the whole family
in

in ease and abundance. Is it not like Joseph sending for his brethern—and Joseph too was a factor. You may suppose the good blind Duke to be Pharoah, if you please; and to complete the resemblance, the Highlanders are all herdsmen, and the vulgar in the Low Country hold them in abomination. It just now occurs to me, why, in a country so near as England, and even in one so assimilated as Ireland, Scotch manners are so little understood. They never write a page on these subjects without making some blunder, which to a Scotchman seems very ludicrous. This comes from confounding the peculiarities, dialect, &c. of the Highlanders with those of the Lowlanders, the two most dissimilar classes of beings existing, in every one particular that marks distinction; the former indeed are a people never to be known unless you live among them, and learn their language. Smollet, in *Humphry Clinker*, is the only writer that has given a genuine sketch of Scotch manners; and in what relates to the lower class of Highlanders, even he appears allowably ignorant, not knowing their language,

guage, and having left the country so young, that he was in a great measure a stranger to the Highlands, though born a borderer on it. The Highlanders are Celts (as Pinkerton in the bitterness of his soul calls them.) Now I and my ancestors are genuine Britons, who, retiring with surly independence before the red eye of the King of the world, and his imperial Eagles, made the strength of rocks ours, snuff'd like wild asses at the voice of the pursuer, and still retain "the garb of old Gaul, and the fire of old Rome." As for you good sober souls of Clydesdale, and all other Dales, sung by the pastoral Muse, your ancestors were good plain Saxons; who, begging to be excused from any particular intimacy with Danish ravens, and Norman leopards, and all foreign birds and beasts, came northward, to shelter under the Scottish fir, and wear for their badge the self-righted Scottish thistle. If proofs were wanting, Shakespeare supplies abundance. King John's cooks and footmen, it is evident, spoke much the same language with the cadies of Edinburgh; and
any

any of us, who have taste to relish Shakespeare, understand readily terms that have puzzled all his southern commentators. In short, you dwellers of the dales, in manners, cookery, &c. are just what the old English were in the days of the rival roses. - I have been greatly amused at hearing an unfledged English Ensign pour contempt upon our good national barley broth, in almost the very terms used by the Constable of France in deriding the heroes of Agincourt :

“ Can sodden water,

“ A drench for sur-rein’d jades, their barley broth,

“ Decoet their cold blood to such valiant heat !”

Now pray do not forget to lodge this discussion and quotation in your paper bag, where much digression and excursion already dwells.—To return to Sandy the primitive, the déserving hero of my tale :—he will at length so colonize the banks of the unrivalled Lake, that the prophetic Valkyria may once more say,

“ Those whom late the desert’s beach

Pent within its bleak domain,

Soon their ample sway shall stretch

: O’er the plenty of the plain.”

Adieu, and do not be angry at me for making you “ Look into the pit, whence thou wast digg’d ; into the whole of the rock, whence thou wast taken ;” though a more exalted origin is claimed by your high descended and high minded friend,

LETTER X.

TO MISS EWING, GLASGOW.

Fort Augustus, April 5, 1779.

THESE promises are very fine, and I suppose generally made on such occasions, but I have no wish for any such homage. I never desire or hope for more confidence, tenderness, or attention than you and I have shewn towards each other. Indeed I expect not even to taste the sweets of a more perfect union of minds. I am neither surprised or chagrined at what you tell me of people’s notion, that my supposed attainments will disqualify me for ordinary duties, that is,
for

for discharging them with diligence and propriety. I shall always think myself obliged to you for every information of this kind, without the least desire of knowing from whom it comes. It is very natural, and perfectly allowable, if one is charged with any matter of fact which one knows not to be true, that every means should be immediately used to disprove it. But, when we merely hear of these vague and general censures, which we constantly, and often justly, pass on each other, instead of a hot and hasty vindication, we should endeavour to profit by this indirect instruction, and remove the pretexts for blame. These good people only think of me what I have often thought of myself, that I am not well qualified for the constant exertion, self-command, and caution requisite in a married life. There is no passion implanted in the mind but for some good purpose; vanity for instance. Now I think there is nothing I should be so vain of as the conquest of my own habits, and other people's prejudices. To excel in a sphere that is thought beyond me, would be a proud boast indeed.

Whatever one bends one's whole mind to, there is some chance of excelling in. But time must decide; and, in the mean time, I must hope and endeavour. I may be rash or indolent, but, on the other hand, I am pretty easy, being sensible I am not so obstinate, opinionated, and self-loving, as pretenders to literature among our sex are generally said to be.—I give you no directions. Suppose yourself a bride, and apply the money as far as it will go.—As to what has been said of what I have written, I am far, far, from assuming the least merit upon it. But this I am very proud of, that, possessing from infancy that glow of imagination, and facility of expression, which the owners are so apt to mistake for genius, I have written so very little. That little too was thrown off in such a careless manner, as made it evident that I had not given much time or thought to it. In the mean time, I send two poetical pieces for your amusement, merely to have them out of the way of more serious concerns. One is from my fanciful correspondent that you wot of; I think it her best; perhaps I am the more partial to it.

it, knowing the subject to be real. I knew the young lady who is the theme of this tale of sorrow. She died last winter, in the twenty-third year of her age, a victim to the struggle betwixt duty and attachment in a delicate and well principled mind. Her conduct, though imprudent, was perfectly innocent. But she was every way delicate, her feelings nursed by indulgence, and all made of tenderness and music. It is cruel to bring up any body so very helpless. I will tell you all about her in my next. The Ode to Hygeia was written by your friend, and intended for Mrs. Sprot, who has long been urging me for something of the kind.

How happy it is, since I am destined to forsake a place so dear to me, that the ties are loosened that held me to it :

“ The shades, the streams, the groves remain :
But friendship there I seek in vain.”

One by one, every body that I cared for dropped off, and I saw nothing around me but dreary vacuity. We shall see what kind of a world the odd beings, so peculiar in tastes and opinions, will create amid the central mountains. No people; however,

have their happiness so much in their own power as we may have, if we were not so much in the region of tempests. We may, perhaps, be obliged to go to a cave, like Ajut and Aningait.—With love to dear Jenny, believe me ever yours.

LETTER XI.

TO MISS EWING.

Fort Augustus, April 18, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I finished my last, I meant to begin another directly, but was prevented by indisposition. I am now, thank God, much better. My grandmother's death, which happened in the beginning of last week, has occasioned my being in a perpetual hurry ever since, with mournings, &c. She has been thought dying for half a year past. The days of her pilgrimage were neither few nor evil (comparatively speaking); she was above fourscore years upon earth,

earth, doing all the good that singular activity and benevolence, directed by very sound sense, could enable her to perform in her contracted sphere: and in consequence of this constant exertion, and the general good will it excited, she was always cheerful, and very resigned in affliction. She departed, full of hope and comfort, with a full confidence in the merits of her Divine Redeemer; and the looking back on a well spent life, supported her in the hour when all other dependence fails, in her eighty-first year. She retained a singular freshness of complexion, and evident remains of that beauty for which in her youth she had been distinguished. Few have met with severer trials than this worthy person had to struggle with; the family from whence she sprung, and the principal ones with which she was connected, were unhappily involved in the fatal (error I must call it, for they, surely, acted on mistaken principle) well the error, the blunder, the mischance of 15 and 45; and her house was crowded with the orphan children of her sister and other relations. This tried her feelings, and wasted her little possessions

possessions severely ; but still she was cheerful, and thought it all well bestowed. 'Tis astonishing what good a superior mind can do, in any situation of life, providing, (and be it always provided) that they walk straight on in the path of practicable duty, and do not "waste their strength," in the "strenuous idleness" of spinning systems, and dreaming dreams, and seeing visions of conferring great benefits, when they should, by vigorous exertion, (like those of my grandmother) enable themselves to pour forth a series of small, yet essential ones. Now, peace be with thy liberal spirit, my grandmother ! and peaceably mayst thou rest with thy fathers in that green and sea surrounded isle, where, undisturbed by the sons of little men, or the spades of venal sextons, so many of thy race rest in social slumber. Oh, to be buried in one of those sanctified islands, where no little boys jump over grave stones, or no great ones trample over the hallow'd dead with callous indifference ! 'Tis hard to leave this sacred asylum of the warrior and the hunter, over which the æolian tones of airy harps sound to the passing

passing blast, while the midnight rowers glide by in solemn silence ; but as we must stay in the great island of Magna Britannia a while longer, “ and in this harsh world draw our breath in pain,” we must refresh our spirits with the best things we meet in it. Now, as I am in the humour of telling stories, and take it for granted that you are in the humour of listening to them, and as female friendship that stands the test of time and his fellow traveller adversity, is one of the best things this untun’d sphere affords, I shall tell you something I have had often in my mind, and as often forgot to amuse you with. You must have heard of Mrs. Buchanan, and the poor contemptible, whom her friends persuaded her to marry, when she was a mere child incapable of chusing ; but perhaps you have not heard that this laird had before paid his addresses to her cousin, the beautiful and accomplished Miss Lucy C. of Glenure, who refused him in favour of a Mr. Cameron in this country, a man every way worthy of her. It was this disappointment which led the “ Lowland laird” to seek an alliance with his present wife,

with

with whom he lived but a few months, his outrageous follies and her inexperienced and rash attempts to restrain them, occasioning an irreconcilable difference. They separated, and "the laird," who was no niggard, allowed her such an annuity as would enable her to live genteelly anywhere. From her youth, and natural love of society and the world, every one thought she would live in the capital; but this, and every scheme of what is called enjoying life, was prevented by her strong attachment to her cousin, Lucy C. above mentioned. - Indeed, to use Shakespear's words on a similar occasion,

" Their loves

Were stronger than the natural bond of sisters ;"

which their former rivalship in Buchanan's affections had never diminished: and whenever Mrs. Buchanan got in some measure free from the matrimonial yoke, she went to live with her cousin. Mr. Cameron's abode, in a sequestered highland glen, much retired, and surrounded with a fast increasing family, and with the endless cares of a country life, could have few attractions for a very young lady, to whom all this was new and foreign. Yet
actuated

actuated by the spirit of heroic friendship, she forsook the world, and secluded herself from what are usually looked on as the pleasures of it, on her cousin's account, whose tender gratitude you may imagine. In this singular and happy union, they lived above seven years. About the time I was in Glasgow with you, Mrs. C. died on the birth of her sixth child. Her cousin, tho' overwhelmed with sorrow at this melancholy event, did not seek for comfort by returning to the world, or to her other friends. She has taken the charge of her cousin's family, and is to her children the most anxious and tender of mothers ; and to this painful duty she has devoted the best years of her life, in this remote place, occupied by cares, that nothing less than necessity, or a mother's feelings could induce any one to undergo. I do not know whether you will view this in the same light, but I think it the most affecting and heroic instance of true friendship I have met with in real life. One can't help comparing it with the lively and impressive portrait Rousseau draws of Clara and Eloisa. I wonder if there is any such friendship

ship

ship among men. Their way of shewing friendship is to venture for each other those lives which they are so apt to squander in duels; but where was friendship, among them, ever so persevering, so graceful, and so tender? Much good may their stern virtues, and their public virtues, and their shining virtues do them; while ours, that flourish in the shade, are their consolation, and the chief blessing of society after all. I am sure I neither envy their turbulent pleasures, or dear bought honours. But we must not speak treason of our protectors,—Adieu, *Friend*. Can I call you any thing dearer or kinder?

LETTER XII.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, July 13, 1779.

MY EVER DEAR NANCY,

You have indeed fully made up for your past seeming negligence, and, what I once
thought

thought was impossible, you have really got beyond me in attention and kindness. Yet do not too soon overvalue yourself, and distrust me, on the strength of this great effort; I refer you to my past punctuality, and hope to convince you further by future steadiness. Without preamble or circum-roundabout, I will satisfy the anxiety you express about the hints in my last. Know, then, that I was at that time engaged in preparations for an event, (to me very important) which took place the following day. 'Tis very odd that our letters, containing intelligence so interesting, should thus have cross'd each other, I am no longer my own, and yet I will be always yours. I have not formed a connection that will chill my affections, or contract my heart. I share all your sorrows as you recite them, and still am most uneasy at the effect which your too acute feelings must have on a constitution so delicate as yours. But you have a weighty duty yet demanding your attention. You will find comfort to yourself in administering it to your remaining parent. The sublime and solid consolations which true religion
and

and right reason afford, are all your own ;
and, tho' well assured that there is indeed

“ No pang like that of bosom torn

From bosom, bleeding o'er the sacred dead,”

yet I trust those truths, which claimed so much of your attention in your gayest and most prosperous days, will support you in your heaviest hours.—It remains now to tell to whom I have made the greatest of all possible sacrifices. It is to a reverend acquaintance of yours, whose name you will find at the conclusion of this. The change so important to me happened in the end of Maylast. After staying near two months at the Fort, and wandering many hours every day through our old delightful haunts, to “ talk the flowing heart,” and compare past conjectures and meditations, we have at length taken up our residence in the Pastor's cottage, which is literally pastoral. Here we have since continued ; not enjoying the ideal felicity of romances, but that rational and attainable degree of happiness which is derived from a sincere and tender mutual esteem, health, tranquillity, and a humble and grateful consciousness of being placed in a situation
equally

equally remote from the cares of poverty and the snares of wealth, from pinching want, and languid unenjoyed superfluity. You know, of old, my notions of matrimony, and how meanly I thought of the usual degree of happiness enjoyed by those who enter into willing subjection. This has proved an advantage to me, as I had no sanguine expectations to be disappointed ; and, contrary I suppose to what happens to most people in similar circumstances, find more of the complacency and attention of the lover in the husband than ever I expected. We were indeed much mistaken in the character of our friend. He has neither the tranquillity nor the indifference we gave him credit for ; wrapt up in his natural reserve, and a restraint arising from some very particular circumstances, he baffled our penetration. Would you think it ? He is generous, impetuous, and singularly acute in all his feelings. His delicacy is extreme : and he has as nice and jealous a sense of honour as any Spaniard whatever.

I once more cordially thank you for your last kind letter, which, by the bye, does not

satisfy me as to what you are about, and whether you think to remain in Ireland. I confess myself surprised at your staying there so long. Mr G. begs to be cordially remembered to you. Offer my affectionate respects to your good mother, and believe me most kindly, most truly,

Yours.

LETTER XIII.

TO MISS EWING, LEITH.

Laggan, August 14, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I OBSERVE, with shame and concern, that I am so far fallen behind, that it is necessary for me, in the mercantile way, to acknowledge “ your several favours duly received,” viz. two from Edinburgh and one from Glasgow ; besides one which I find is on the way, and daily (eagerly I assure you) expected.

You

You see where I am by the date of this. It is a month since I came, accompanied by my father and the awful man who tied the fatal knot. Christina, our old associate on *Drimen Duie*, was also there. They said they came to see whether "the said knot sat easy on the bound," &c. So these good folks departed, after assisting us to receive some ceremonious visitors, and left us to ourselves. Now it is time you should know who *ourselves* are. Know, then, that Mr. G.'s mother was in the house with him; remember, I have notified this in form, and expect additional congratulations on that account, for I should have been lost and bewildered on my entrance on such a new scene, as the government of more than half a dozen country servants, and the complicated œconomy of a farm, without such a monitress. You will not wonder that I am already very fond of my mother-in-law, when I tell you she is just what our dear Harriet will be thirty years hence, in mind and manner, and an expression in the faded beauty of her countenance that one might be tempted to call heavenly: such eyes you never saw, in
a head

a head that one may call a fine antique. It would fatigue you to describe the gauntlet we ran of visitation and re-visitatio; though it might give room for a further display of my picturesque manner of conveying characters to you by comparison and analogy, I cannot as yet enlarge. My neighbours, the wild braes of Badenoch considered, are more than tolerable; some of them rise to agreeable, and some soar up to very agreeable. This accounts for much of my time. The weather too has been so very fine, the lord of the cottage is so fond of walking, and I am so fond of accompanying him through the pleasantest of all meadows which surround us, that much time is wasted in that way; then there are the cares of a family, of which family I am hitherto very careless, but care will come too soon; then the early mornings are no longer mine, because, alas! I am no longer my own. Yet you shall always find me most affectionately

Yours.

LETTER XIV.

TO MISS EWING, GLASGOW.

Laggan, July 1781.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

EVER pleasing and acceptable as your kind, kind letters are to me, your last was doubly so, arriving as it did most opportunely, "To cheer the heavy hours obscured by pain," and suggesting the comforting idea of your being not only in health but in better spirits than I have known you for some time past.

I am tired of quaint devices, and quite of your mind as to that of your ring. It shews the utmost humility, in the first place; and I am so far from thinking with Jane, that it betrays a poverty of invention, that I am charmed with its simplicity. A pretty fanciful motto might apply to any body, but A. G. that significant cypher, is I myself, I; and the laurel wreath inclosing it, may mean the perpetual verdure of friendship, or my

invincible courage when I used to protect you from those cows whose armed foreheads used to fill you with such tender fears, pretty coward that you are. Were this memorial embellished with such fine sentences as you and I could easily make or steal, vanity and friendship might have equal claims; but now 'tis an unequivocal offering to the sweet social power that has smiled so long upon us. I am glad the fashion of despising things, common and easily attained, is so prevalent; infidelity and licentiousness will soon lose the charms of novelty and singularity, they will be so despicably common; and religion and common sense will add lustre to their own weight, and be sought after as respectable oddities at least.

I enjoy, in your description, the entertainment you received on the bank of Carron's sounding stream, where Oscar, king of spears, rose bright in arms to curb the King of the world, and made the Roman Eagles stoop before the race of Morven. Time has been, when the "light of my soul arose" at the name of this young hero,
so

so long deplored by Malvina; so mourned by the sweet voice of Cona.

Receive your packet, all but the poetry; these, being copies, and you possessed of the originals, I keep till you reclaim them. I am charmed with the freedom, ease, and gaiety, which reigned in your little society at Arran, and which has not passed uncelebrated, or unsung. The Laureat of Arran seems to wear his bays with becoming carelessness, and rather to laugh at than value himself for having them. He certainly possesses original genius, and a vein of humour not extremely refined, but genuine, easy and Fergusonial. He has made his dog very eloquent, and, like another talking animal of old renown, he reproves the madness of his master with justice and severity.

How could it enter into that adamantine heart of yours to keep me so long in suspense about a matter that concerns me so much to know? As for lovers, they are a generation born to be teased; but me you shall tease no longer. Have you no compassion on the fatigues of my imagination,

E 2

drawing

drawing numberless pictures of my friend that is to be? On pain of my displeasure, let his name, age, and complexion, be immediately forth-coming; "let me not burst in ignorance, but tell me:" I will not whisper it to the rushes. In hopes of your speedy compliance,

I remain yours as you demean yourself.

LETTER XV.

TO MISS EWING, GLASGOW.

Fort Augustus, Nov. 6, 1781.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

FROM this "region of silence and shade," I thought to have written at length and at leisure; but leisure so often slighted I now vainly solicit. I have been so engrossed by visitors, and engaged with preparing, for the loom, the purple and fine linen which my maids have been spinning in the Glens
all

all summer, that I have not so much as wandered on the Loch side, or lounged in the garden since I came here. This last is now withered, but to my fancy it was so a month ago. I look at it as I suppose divorced people do at each other, when a little lurking love remains. I must forsake it, and all I love here, before nature opposes her irremovable bar. You will think I am talking very solemnly about travelling the twenty-five miles between here and Laggan; for I do not know that ever I told you how peculiarly we are situated with regard to each other. This district is divided from ours by an immense mountain called *Corryarrick*. That barrier is impassable in the depth of winter, as the top of it is above the region of clouds; and the sudden descent on the other side peculiarly dangerous, not only from deep snows concealing the unbeaten track of the road, but from whirlwinds and eddies that drive the snow into heaps; besides an evil spirit which the country people devoutly believe to have dwelt there time out of mind.

I was rather urgent in requesting permis-

sion to make this visit, because my little daughter is here, who loves me and smiles on me irresistibly, and whom I must needs leave as a substitute for myself; and then I resolved to enjoy the last fading gleams of Autumn here, and embrace my dear parents before I should be separated from them all winter by this dreadful barrier. The society is varied by some new characters; not military ones, but just such harmless, good-humoured people as one takes pleasure in pleasing, and leaves without a pang. My mate has chosen this time to visit his Strathspey friends. I am beginning to be on the spur homeward; snow is now beginning to fall; but though I should "ride on clouds and skies," I must get home immediately.

Now I will give you a sketch of our situation, and you will say 'tis time. After crossing this awful mountain, we travel eastward through twelve miles of bleak inhospitable country, inhabited only by moor-fowl, and adorned with here and there a booth, erected for a temporary shelter to shepherds, who pass the summer with their flocks in these
lonely

lonely regions. On leaving this waste, you enter a vale six miles in length, and half a mile broad, which wants nothing but wood to be beautiful; it has indeed some copses, or what the Scottish bards call shaws. This vale consists entirely of rich meadow and arable lands, and has the clear and rapid Spey running through the middle of it. About the centre of this vale, at the foot of a mountain which screens it from the north wind, stands our humble dwelling; just such a cottage as that at Greenlaw, only higher, admitting of attic chambers for you to repose in.

You will wonder we have not the good house to which the Pastor's office entitles him. That should be built on the glebe, and can be no where else, and this glebe is a nook which none but a hermit would inhabit. Then we are so far from market, that, unless the ravens were commissioned to feed us, we could not do without a farm; which affording us every necessary of life, we send to Inverness (only fifty miles off) for elegancies and superfluities; elegant sugar, and superfluous tea, for instance. The last incum-

bent preferred getting this farm at an easy rate and living in a cottage of his own building, to a more elegant mansion without that advantage; and we have made the same sacrifice of vanity to convenience. We have a great extent of moor and hill grazing, where they say we may feed some hundreds of sheep, a very suitable flock for a person who ought to be much detached from secular cares, having a shepherd kept purposely to attend them. They require even in winter no food or shelter, but what the hills afford. Our neighbours abound in courtesy and civility, and many of them, having been abroad in the army, are sufficiently intelligent. I remember before I knew any thing about these countries, being much delighted to hear of the Swifs; who, they say, after serving in the French army, and sharing in all the gaieties of Paris, retire towards the decline of life to their own country, and there immediately and with alacrity resume their pristine simple and hardy manners and habits. But there is no *amor patriæ* like that of mountaineers, every where. The people here so entirely resume their early modes

modes of living and thinking, that they give probability to all we hear of those children of the rocks in other countries.

* * * * *

Now I feel I have tired you ; for when I flag I have always a happy consciousness of my own stupidity, and shall therefore bid you farewell, to write to one who will think all my nothings very interesting ; so indeed do you :—forgive, then, this implied preference, and believe, that I am to you unchangeable. Adieu.

LETTER XVI.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

(formerly Miss EWING.)

Laggan, March 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE now to thank you for your long kind letter, and for introducing me to that most desirable place your fire-side. Long, long may the genius of domestic happiness

smile in your chimney corner! and, if in process of time, some other friendly genius should set me down smiling in the opposite corner, with you and your Caro laughing in the middle, and sister Jane and my Caro simpering together behind, we should form a charming groupe, and I should be as happy as is permitted to us in this probatory noviciate of being. This, perhaps, as we are all circumstanced, is a romantic wish; but I have no notion of throwing cold water upon those glimmerings of hope which occasionally cheer and enliven one's gloomiest moments. From the more extended circle of your connexions, and your happiness in being the centring point of that circle, 'tis altogether impossible that you feel my absence as I do yours. But I know you will have influence enough to bring your beloved here, and that will be a second spring of the affections, and we shall then all know and love each other. This I feel certain of. With you it rests to realize this cordial presentiment. Sure, people that can go through this cold world, unloving and unloved, do not feel its sorrows as I do, or they would sink under them.

them. You inquire if I left Mary at Fort Augustus; I durst not do otherwise, she is so firmly established in the affections of the good old people, that it would be a breach of the peace to deprive them of her. This does not please her father, who is afraid of his dear daughter being spoiled, but, in fact, very unwilling to part with her, though he affects to be too manly to be fond of an infant; but he wants a pretence to lament her absence without descending from his dignity. For my own part, I honestly confess, that my heart ached at parting with her. I would not wish these human flowers to breathe their first fragrance on any breast but my own.

* * * * *

I am sorry to hear that the Naiads of my native Clyde have paid you such an abrupt visit. The more substantial water nymphs who inhabit the square temple of purity in the green could not be ruder. You dwellers in the Stockwell and Bridge-gate must be an iniquitous generation to be so inundated. We have, notwithstanding our primitive innocence and rural simplicity, met with a

still severer shock, having had, for two months past, a winter as rigorous and terrible as those of the honest Laplanders, who, as the sweet singer of Tiviot Dale tells us, “love their mountains, and enjoy their storms.” I could have done so too, while they only afforded us a tremendous amusement, but now that our poor sheep are perishing in scores under the wreaths, I see it in a very different light. You will be very sorry to hear that our loss in this article has been considerable.

Now be correct, diligent, lively and communicative; in short, be a peerless correspondent, for you are the link that holds me to Clydesdale; and if you break—But you never can, because you are the faithful friend of

Your ever affectionate

LETTER XVII.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

January 2, 1783.

WHEN I sit down to write to you, after this too long interval, and begin to taste the pleasure of reviving in this manner the delightful ease and tendernefs of our past intercourse, my heart glows at the recollection, and I am surpris'd at myself for allowing so long a time to elapse, without indulging myself in so pure a satisfaction. But, when my crowd of worldly cares rush in to interrupt this delightful reverie, the fervours of friendship, like those of a sublimer kind, are drowned in the clamours of the world. I never experienced so much of this tiresome turmoil, as since I wrote to you last. But before I proceed to my wonted egotism, let me acknowledge your kind letter, which, after lying in state two months at Perth, reached me when I too was lying in state; of which more hereafter.

I rejoice

I rejoice to hear that you are become

“The joyful mother of a hopeful son.”

How thankful should you be to Providence, which has enabled you to fulfil the first duty of that fond relation ! I am sure you will pity me, who, though earnestly desirous, and in some respects well qualified, am not permitted to nurse ; the wise people about me being of opinion that it would endanger my small stock of health at this season.

“He that’s convinc’d against his will;
Is of the same opinion still.”

I shall have endless remorse, if any thing happens. My mother was kind enough to risk a winter journey over Corryarrick, and it is by her advice that Miss is sent to grafs. I am anxious to hear more particular accounts of young master. Whom do the wise people say he resembles ? I am sure they have discovered him to be either his father’s picture, or his mother’s image, for these are the invariable phrases.—I am truly obliged to Jane for her letter. ’Tis great charity in you and her to write on, without minding my suspensions.—You know I long ago remarked :

remarked to you, that people get no extraordinary gifts, without having some extraordinary occasion for the exertion of them ; so it is with the spirit and fortitude of your left-handed hero, who it seems has had these heroic qualities not a little exercised. He seems to be a perfect Ulysses in his woes, his wanderings, and his perils. I hope the conclusion of them will be equally successful ; that he will escape the fury of the American Læstrigones, and enticements of the West Indian Lotophagi ; and that some fond and faithful Penelope will soothe and reward him after all these scenes of danger and distress are over.—I send you a great, comprehensive benediction, including your brother and my dear Harriet. May every return of this season of good wishes, bring health and felicity to you and your beloved ! so prays, so wishes,

Your own, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Laggan, August 7, 1784.

MY DEAR FRIEND!

I HOPE this will find you safely arrived in town with your mate, and relieved from all apprehensions about the *son of your love*. I have no doubt but your dear little sufferer has gone through much distress; but your timidity of temper makes me hope you have in fancy, aggravated the danger.—I rejoice to think you are so partial to all my dear retreats, to Spey, Corryarrick, and, above all, to the lord of the cottage. I should not have died in peace unless you had seen and liked us all. I am quite gratified to think how much *you* please *him*. Nature, delicacy, and gentleness is all in all to him. He revolts at every shadow of affectation, and detects pretensions with a glance. I dare say in his whole lifetime, he never said a word, the intention of which was to bias any one.

one in his favour. You must like him as he is, or not like him at all; but I was sure you would and must like him. Never were two unpretending beings more congenial in their manner of thinking. He was extremely partial to your letters, before he saw you. You and he too have this in common, that you both appear to most advantage on paper, where your diffidence does not stand in your way. He admires my application of Collins's Address to Simplicity to you, and says you really are,

“ By nature taught,
To breathe her genuine thought
In language warmly pure and sweetly strong.”

Now the least thing you can do in return for all this, is to tell me how your beloved likes me, and the cottage, and so forth. What an ingrate he must be, if not partial to the wife of one who loves his wife so well, especially when the lady in question is so well disposed towards him. My dear; we ought, as Caius says of Dr. Evans in the play, “ to pray our pibles well,” that matters happened as they did; nursing our delicacy and our affection as we did, in tender friendship and voluntary retirement,

retirement, cultivating our taste to a degree which circumstances might have rendered very inconvenient, we should have been wretched caitiffs, had men fallen to our lot, such as the generality of our friends are very well satisfied with. For my own part, I could never have endured grossness, or indifference, or twenty things I see better people put up with, who do not seem to think there is the smallest occasion for common tastes and inclinations. In such a case, I think, "I would never tell my *hate*;" but, I dare say, concealment would, like an envious worm, "feed on my meagre cheek." Alas! how I play with a subject that should touch us both very nearly, when we think of her who has full as much feeling and delicacy as any of us, who always suffers, and never complains! With her disposition she would have been too happy, had she met, like us, with gentleness, attention, and indulgence.

"Turn, hopeless thought, turn from her."

Your other letter is come, and I am so pleased! I began to fret and wonder, and my very Caro, who hates impatience, began to look solemn and significant, and wonder if
you

you were well. These post-horses are brutes void of all finer feelings ; and, so far from improving by the literary commerce they are the means of carrying on, they seem insensible of the loads of information, consolation, and ratiocination they carry on their backs, and will not budge a foot faster to relieve even the impatience of lovers. For instance, your letter was full sixteen days on the way. I am sure you will be glad to hear that we have a delightful prospect of a fine harvest ; flax in abundance, potatoes, your favourites, in superabundance, and “ the breezes wave the ripening corn ” in profuse luxuriance ; but then you will be sorry again to hear, that for a few days past, all this fair promise of plenty was like to be drenched in floods of rain, and overwhelmed with the swelling of Spey. However, you must be glad again to hear that this is only the equinoctial storm, and that we still hope for good weather to enable us to rejoice in the blessings of Providence. Mr. G. joins in affectionate good wishes to your lord ; I have no room or time for other remembrances ; but, while I can think, I shall be faithfully yours.

LETTER XIX.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Laggan, August 18. 1785.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR kind letter, and the little volunteer that came with Jenny's, gave me more pleasure than you can imagine, considering what a variety of pains and pleasures engross, agitate, and divide me by turns. Before I enter on the subject of yours, I must tell you how we went to Fort George, in the little machine, and took Catharine with us, who was not alarmed, as on a former occasion when you were with us, but, on the contrary, seemed highly delighted with the journey, and all its accompaniments. The journey, by the bye, was a very pleasant one, being a continued series of visits, as the road passed the houses of our connections and friends all the way. The scene of the meeting between the two sisters was more pathetic, and less ludicrous, than the one you witnessed formerly. Their mutual
joy

joy and affection was really *edifying*. The eldest has made great improvements; so great that it would be no wonder if, like other little prodigies, she should disappoint all expectation. There is a lady, whom I heard lately speak on the subject, who is so impressed with the idea of premature children's disappointing hope, that she told me, with great tartness, she never liked *progidys*, and was very glad there were no *progidys* in their family.—Fort George is a gay and polite place; the society well bred and agreeable, and the neighbourhood populous and pleasant. I made a short excursion to Ross-shire, saw the pretty little town of Fortrose, and the coast of that fine country, thickly planted with gentlemen's seats, being the residence of the powerful clans of Ross and Mackenzie - - - - -

So, after spending three weeks very agreeably at the Fort, we set out very early, before the *bairns* rose, to avoid the struggle of parting; because both their hearts were set on coming home with us, and we had settled to leave Catharine there, for her improvement in the elegancies of the English tongue.

I do

I do not speak of conquering our Scotch, alias Doric, dialect, the sweet simplicity of which I think pleasing in a child ; but you are to know, that I make a point of making my mountain nymphs speak the language of the mountains in the first place. I am all anti-Pinkerton, and delight in the Celtic. You cannot think what a source of pleasure my little acquaintance with that emphatic and original language has afforded me. I am determined my children shall all drink “ from the pure wells of Celtic undefiled.” They shall taste the animated and energetic conversation of the natives ; and an early acquaintance with the poetry of nature shall guard them against false taste and affectation. I never desire to hear an English word out of their mouths till they are four or five years old. How I should delight in grafting elegant sentiments and just notions on simple manners and primitive ideas ! This is just the forte piano character that we always wish for, and seldom meet. How, indeed, should we ? People, whose circumstances confine them to breed their children at home, are so apt to have them spoil’d
for

for want of culture, and by vulgar affociation. Then, if they send them to the common seminaries, there are so many of them together, spoiling each other with trifling conversation ; and the love of vanity and dress rages like a contagion ; their manners, nay, their very ideas, are so artificial, that their minds and manners wear a tiresome uniform. Now, I am going to make an experiment on my mountain nymphs. If it fails, your laughing at me will be only the smallest part of my mortification. Know, then, that I propose, in the first place, to attend, above all things, to the culture of the heart : and at leisure, and in due time, to the understanding ; and, having secured these main points, to let the manners, in a great measure, shift for themselves. I pre-suppose a tolerable good disposition, and some degree of sensibility ; and, taking these for granted, I cannot easily believe that an unpolluted mind, unaccustomed to fear from without, or reproach from within, bred in the centre of kindness and confidence, and having all its best affections constantly exercised, I cannot, I say, suppose any other than soft
and

and artless manners to flow spontaneously from such a mind, so formed, and so circumstanced ; especially, when unaccustomed to vulgar language, and, what is far more degrading, vulgar sentiments, which I have heard conveyed in very good language from very pretty mouths. Even the strong temptation of wandering in my favourite path can scarce excuse this long scamper. So we set out, as I told you, and, after proceeding five or six miles, spent the rest of the morning in surveying the antiquities of Calder Castle, a venerable and gloomy edifice of grey renown ; for this is the Cawdor of Macbeth, and it was a few miles to the south of it, that the witches anticipated his titles. I fancy their bagships resided hereabouts ; at any rate, I am sure the demon of black-despairing melancholy dwells in some of those caverns that echo the roar of Calder water. The house has no other inhabitant at present than an old Sybil, who lives in the cellar, and some legions of rooks and daws in the lofty towers, that add strength and horror to this antique dwelling. You enter over a very narrow drawbridge

drawbridge, laid across a deep chasm. We saw some good paintings, and tapestry frightfully fine; for Pharaoh was there driving so furiously after the Israelites, and and the Red Sea rushing so fiercely upon Pharaoh, that you started back instinctively, not knowing which to fear most. Small gothic “windows, that admit no light, and passages that lead to nothing,” or, at most, to a small dark room with a thick heavy door, strengthened with iron; these, and resounding dusky halls, and narrow winding staircases, give no very high idea of the enjoyments of the virtuous and stately dames, who wrought tapestry here in the days of feudal grandeur, and perpetual hostility. You are shewn, in very high tower, the self-same bed in which Duncan, of pious memory, was murdered by Macbeth. It was brought from Inverness, on the demolition of the castle there. The fact of Duncan’s being killed in it is hard to establish; but the bed is certainly unique in itself, and very unlike the beds of these degenerate days. It is, in the first place, very large, and exactly square; it is magnificent in its own way, yet it is evident

that curtains were an unknown luxury when it was framed ; the wooden canopy which forms the roof is furrounded by a moulding or cornice two feet deep at least, of wood exquisitely carved in flowers, with many imitations of palm and pine branches, and good store of thistles. Round the frame of the bed, or bedstead, which is very low, though the canopy be lofty, is another moulding seemingly formed to prevent the possibility of his majesty's tumbling out. This, too, is richly carved ; so are the posts, and certain raised ornaments, not inelegantly representing branches at the corners. In short, the expence of carving this bed, if the artist's recompence was adequate to his labour and ingenuity, might purchase the most costly curtains. From the battlements of the Castle you see, in the back ground, a thick forest, old beyond history or memory, and solemn beyond imagination. Tremendous rugged rocks appear emerging from the wood ; on one side you see the chasm and drawbridge aforesaid ; on the other, the river Calder, dark in its colour, and devious in its course, howling, groaning, and boiling through

through a rocky channel, worn into many dismal pits and cauldrons: at the foot of that rock on which the house stands, 'tis so deep and dark, that it dizzies one to look down from the tower. In short the gloomy pools below, and pendant branches above, might almost tempt a love-sick maiden, or fog-sick Englishman, to hanging or drowning. There is a wide view towards the sea, including the heath where the weird sisters announced the fatal career of successful ambition to Macbeth, whom I always figure to myself saying, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing." After looking down with complacency on the numerous families of ravens, whom we used to look up to at a great distance, in the vast old elms that were planted, before the union at latest, round this venerable pile, we quitted Calder, with an emotion of gratitude for being born in happier times; when high-born dames and barons bold are no longer forced to seek security from rugged manners, and feudal outrage, in those terrific mansions. Now, after this hopeful outset, consider what a fair field of description lies before

you, for this is only the morning scene ; and, after performing an *act of recollection* on the moor, the whole *country* of Strathspey opened upon us—Castle Grant, the surrounding pleasure grounds and gardens, which are very fine, though surmounted by rude environs. There are numerous paintings there, to my great *delectation*. Some of these are very characteristic of the amiable propensity of this family, to cherish the inferior gentry and their humble relations, who “dwelt under their shadow.” There is a pleasant summer parlour, opening, with a glass door, to the garden, the walls of which are entirely covered with the portraits of those lesser gentry around, who were attached, many of them, by the double tie of kindred and feudal subjection. This last was rather patriarchal sway, as they managed it. Never, surely, was power so gently used, or protection so gratefully acknowledged. Those endearing, though invisible and undefinable ties, that have for generations held these people so strongly to each other, and to their chief, produce united effects, which afford one of the most pleasing

pleasing views of human nature that can be met with. The family, luckily for you, were from home, but had left their effigies behind. Caro was quite charmed to see with what reverence I beheld his kindred shades. He is to-night extremely anxious about saving my poor eyes. So it shall suffice, that the Castle is a spacious, convenient, and elegant mansion, where many heroes of the family, “on animated canvass seem to frown;” and where every thing evinces an abode, where baronial pomp and hospitality still continue to linger, softened by the milder graces of modern elegance. These eyes I must save, and therefore I bid you heartily good night, and will begin a new letter to-morrow; for if once I resume the reins of government, I shall not lay them down for landscape painting. Adieu! my true friend.

LETTER XX.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, August 19, 1785.

AGAIN I resume, and I insist on being allowed some merit in resuming, when the meadows, glittering with dew, the ascending larks, the fresh flowers, and the curling mists that climb the opposite mountain, all invite me out to enjoy the sweetest hour of day, the soft shadowy twilight excepted. You know not how sweet and sacred the hour is that I devote to you.——To return to Strathspey. We spent two days with a relation of Mr. G's, and on Sunday went to hear my old friend's lord preach. After sermon, we went in, and with difficulty escaped their kind compulsion, for we were engaged. She* becomes the holy state very well; seemed composed and cheerful, domesticated, and in a fair way of being ruf-

* Beatrice, to whom an epistle is addressed in the author's poetical volume, and who is married to a clergyman in Strathspey.

ticated.

ticated. Strathspey is quite a civilized country, compared to this, and has a good neat village in it, where the father of the district has been cherishing some exotic manufactures, which do not seem to find the soil congenial. In fact, a Highlander never sits at ease at a loom; 'tis like putting a deer in the plough. We made a circuit of two days more, and then came home, and found all well and happy. I am glad to hear such good accounts of John Beverly, who, I trust, will do credit to my recommendation. He appears a well-disposed boy, strongly marked with the true English character of sincerity, integrity, and plain sound sense. So much for this subject. Rochefoucault says, very ill-naturedly, that people always find consolation very easily for the misfortunes of their friends. Painful experience assures me of the contrary. My very spirit is wounded by my dear Harriet's accumulated sorrows; and reflection, instead of soothing, aggravate my affliction. When I think over all our early friendship, animated by the ardour natural to that innocent age, on her side so pure

and genuine ; when I think on all her truth, her gentleness and meekness, and the dignity and delicacy that were intuitive (for of *whom* should she learn them ?) My dear soul, you never knew her so well as I did. The powers of her understanding, and the graces of her mind, never met with the sunshine of encouragement. At the very time when they were expanding, we know how she was secluded from improvement, and crushed by arbitrary harshness. What a moderate degree of prosperity would have been happiness to a spirit so regulated and so tranquil ! but, alas ! to sink under the cold hand of poverty, and have so many innocent sufferers looking up to her, (I greatly fear, too, that he who should support and comfort her is by no means what we would wish him to be,) we know not even what to say to her. Sympathy, so sweet, so soothing, in other cases, avails not here. For, to a person who has so much delicate pride, when one cannot alleviate pecuniary distress, 'tis insulting to mention it. What shall we, what can we, do for our friend ?—Remember us with much esteem to your beloved. Accept the kindest wishes

wishes towards you and yours from Charlotte. What a tide of information you must pour in upon me, in return for this descriptive effort in folio. Be conscientious, and then you will not be concise. Adieu !

LETTER XXI.

TO MISS JANE EWING, AT GLASGOW.

Laggan, March 1, 1786.

MY DEAR JANE,

I HOPE this will find you safely returned from England, much improved by your travels, and so replenished with candour and good nature, that you will excuse my sending this by the post ; which, I protest, proceeds from no hostile design against your purse, nor from any vain conceit that you will have here the value of your sixpence ; but to relieve me from a weight of perplexity and concern that I can support no longer. But in case there should have been mistakes or misapprehensions, I shall give you a clear

retrospective view of the whole state of our correspondence since Mr. G. brought me your May letter. Now, my dear, I think, no scruple can remain ; and I beg of you, by all that is dear and friendly, to send me, by the very next post, fixpennyworth of your own characteristic truth and intelligence.

New objects, new pleasures, and new attachments obtrude themselves so frequently, from the very nature of the gay shifting scene around you, that 'tis no wonder they should insensibly exclude the old ones, whose distance, both in regard to time and place, make them appear remote even to your imagination. But how different is my situation ! Placed on a serene and distant eminence, whence I view the toils and pleasures of the gay and busy world with tranquil unconcern, I am absorbed in the delightful contemplation of those virtues and graces, either budding into hope or arriving at maturity, which my partial fondness fancies in those who are united to me by those tender ties which nature forms and sentiment rivets. Thus, free from the tyranny of caprice and custom, thus, disincumbered of those hollow friendships,

ships, the offspring of interest or vanity, which divide the attention without sharing the heart, I have balanced and closed up my books of attachment, am scarce so sanguine as to expect I shall find truth and sensibility enough to induce me to open them for the reception of a new object ; and proud and pleased to think, that I have bartered away my affections for such advantageous bargains of merit and real friendship. I have now, like an opulent trader, retiring to my country house, placed my fortune (of friends) in the stocks (i. e. my heart), and it is become my great speculation, like theirs, to watch the rise and fall of the funds ; and, to tell you the truth, I begin to fear having fallen much below par with you.—Pray allow me here, however foreign the subject may seem to you, to claim your sympathy in the deep concern I feel for the death of my friend Christina Macpherson. Her departure was very sudden ; she was nursing her second son, was attacked by a kind of fever incident to nurses, (though rarely fatal), and died the second day. You can't think how I was affected by her loss, though already lost to me

in an unequal marriage. Her sense was strong and masculine; her sentiments just and liberal, though neither soft nor polished; and her affection for me, such as now wrings my heart to remember. What a deep and dismal chasm is left in the imagination, when the mind wanders in search of what is torn for ever from its grasp, and, for the open heart and melting eye of friendship, meets only the solitary mansions of the dead! Now that I am in the figurative mood, you must indulge on more allusion to the sybil's books, which increased in value as they decreased in number. Even thus it is with my dear remaining friends; so you may contemplate your own importance as a volume of increasing value.—C.* goes on improving amazingly; she has an uncommon memory, lively and delicate feelings, and a strong desire to please and excel. Her junior has much pastoral expression of countenance, which, in the Arcadian language, means gentleness and innocence. She is prudent, regular, and exact in all her little transactions. J. L. is a great lump of generosity

* These passages refer to the author's children.

and good-nature, and shrewd withal : whose mind, I take it, will be as open as his countenance. P. has a more marked countenance than any of them ; his features are regular, and, for a boy, delicate : he has much fire and alertness about him. He was very healthy, and so quiet that it was a pleasure to nurse him ; which pleasure, however, was interrupted by a severe attack of the rheumatism. He now walks, and speaks many words. Apologies for egotism between you and me are affected and unnecessary. Of whom or of what can I write here so interesting to you as myself ? and the same holds from you to me. Caro sends many, very many, and kind compliments to you all. This letter is levelled partly at you and partly at your sister ; the very idea of her neglect is wounding. Remember me with esteem to all your brothers, and to your mother ; and let me know by next post, whether you think it of importance that

I am yours unalterably.

LETTER XXII.

TO MISS JANE EWING.

Laggan, July 5, 1786.

MY DEAR JANE,

WITH all due gratitude I acknowledge your three letters, which, from a travell'd lady, just arrived from England, to a rusticated highland matron, are no small marks of condescension. But you will never assume a character, and have not been long enough from home to acquire a new one. The merit of your kindness is augmented by considering what small returns of entertainment you have to expect.

We here have been all in a hurry with public amusements for this fortnight past. You will be quite at a loss to conjecture of what kind they could be. Rouns (sales) then, are a source of great amusement here, and a very expensive one to the roun-makers. At the dissolution of any family, by the death or removal of its head, it is customary here
to

to send letters of invitation to all the connexions, which inter-marriages have created to the defunct for a century past in the neighbouring counties, inviting them to countenance the ceremony by their presence. This invitation tacitly includes an expectation, warranted by old custom, that these allies, as they call them, will purchase things rather beyond their value. The wealth of the family consisting in the number of their cattle, and their pride in the number of their connexions, the one come to purchase the other, and both are displayed in their full extent. Whether it can be well afforded or not, there is always a plentiful dinner, and very plentiful drink on these occasions, which the friendly greetings of so many people, bound by a common tie, frank, lively, and not deficient in that good breeding which habitual kindness and courtesy forms, render no unpleasing scene to those who witness the conclusion of it. It is indeed a very joyous one. Besides the entertainment for the superior class, there is always a plentiful distribution of bread and cheese and whisky to the peasantry whose cheerfulness never exceeds the bounds

bounds of respect and decorum. The general good humour diffused by this meeting of numbers, who know and like each other, though they do not often mingle, and the emulation of good will to the entertainers, generally raisethings to a great price. Though you want nothing, you must appear to countenance the business ; a refusal on such an occasion would be thought as odd in the highland *monde*, as it would be in the *beau monde*, to refuse an invitation to stand and be shot at. You always hear Highlander talk of *countries* ; but did I ever tell you what our countries are ? not by any means parishes, counties, or any such divisions as you are used to : a country here means a habitable track, divided by rocks, mountains and narrow passes, from the adjacent countries, and inhabited by a particular clan. These, in places where only two or three miles of rocky eminence separate them, differ in looks, language, and manners, more than you can imagine possible ; nay, they affect to differ ; for bordering clans often live in bitter and jealous rivalry ; and though individuals love, and sometimes marry each other, the general
dislike

dislike continues. Different clans, in their collective capacity, form strict alliances with each other, and are cordial in their attachment ; but they are those who live at a distance from each other, and cannot interfere about hunting, hill-pasture, &c. The Grants and Macleans, for instance.—But to return to our rouns. We were not, on this occasion, presented with the usual spectacle of festivity mingling with the grief of the widow and orphans. The first was that of a person who died childless ; and, from the caprice of his nature, never could enjoy the gifts of fortune ; though he was, at the same time, a man of such upright intentions, that we all acquiesced most patiently in his removal, hoping he would find that peace in happier regions which eluded his grasp in this discordant world. After picking the bones of our departed neighbour, we all set out to eat the chieftain up alive ; for you must know he is a Colonel of the Guards, and took a fancy to live on his estate two years ago—built a new house, and brought fashionable furniture from London. For half a year, he
lived

lived hospitably *in the abode of his fathers* ; but wishing to have his domain improved and planted, and aspiring as every Colonel does, to die a General, he has let it for ten years to a judicious and noted improver, on condition of having it restored with hundreds of dykes, thousands of drains, and ten thousands of trees upon it. Judge, then, how you will find the scenery tamed and improved when you return. To make way for this arrangement, every article of cattle and furniture was sold. The *roup* lasted a week. There were several of our connections from Strathspay there. We had a cold collation there every day, and as many strangers every night at our own house as it would accommodate. When all this was over, we paid a round of visits with the Grants, before their departure.—Curtis was nearly blown up in the Cæsar man of war, and is come home from that scene of wealth and corruption, with his mind unspoiled and his pockets empty. I am told he is doing well enough in his original profession. He will be happier, but the world will not think so. My cousin, whom
you

you have seen, is returned from India, perfectly qualified to talk of

“Antres vast, and deserts wild,”

for he returned overland. He passed through Syria, and was half a year in Cyprus, and returned by Marseilles. He, too, has failed of enriching himself in the modern Ophir; but I question whether he will bear the privations that obscurity is heir to, as well as the philosophic Curtis, who is too wise for ambition, and too calm to be disturbed by the fervors of imagination. I will write to your sister from the leisure of the Fort; and in the mean time, give you joy of the conclusion of this long tiresome letter, and bid you heartily, Adieu.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Fort George, July 30, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE been long meditating a stroke at your sixpence, but still deferred it till I should

should leave home, and reach this haven of tranquillity; where, amidst the sound of fifes and drums, and small arms, I seek that quiet and leisure which I look for in vain amidst the more discordant tumults of the nursery; where the thorough bass of the bull and the old sow, from without, and the shrill treble accompaniment of the pigs and poultry, form a complete anti-concert. Not that I mean to complain of the country, for, jesting apart, I never enjoyed it more than I did this past summer, notwithstanding the constant fatiguing exertion which my situation demands. You, who are the repository of all my complaints, know very well what a wretched invalid I was all last winter; but the spring, the sun, and health returning all together, and that so mild and sweet a spring as I never saw in this northern climate, you cannot think how suddenly I benefited from its reviving and gladdening influence. Then my little boy, the finest creature you ever saw, began to run about earlier than any I ever had, and, from being a trouble, became a pleasure and amusement to the whole family. My eldest came down here in May, where

where he is to remain, being the darling of his grandfather's affections ; so that we have none to disturb us but the two girls and little *Pickle*. We had the warmest, brightest summer imaginable ; and when the busy cares of day were done, we used to saunter every evening, by Spey, till eleven o'clock, through meadows *literally* flowery, for you never saw such a luxury of sweets. There too

“ Quiet waters, soft and flow,
Along the verdant landscape flow.”

It was then and there that we tasted, with the highest relish, the true enjoyment of minds detached from the world, may I add, somewhat raised above it—“ In that kind school, where no proud master reigns, the full free converse of the mutual heart, improving and improved.” But need I describe this kindly intercourse to you, who understand it so well, and who love, as much as I do, to cherish the remembrance of scenes and conversations never to be recalled, but always to be regretted ; where that love of sincerity, of nature, and of virtue, which charmed and united us, expanded

panded our hearts, and excluded the scandal, tittle-tattle about fashions and coxcombs, and jealous malignity, which so frequently engross the tête-à-têtes of misses in and out of their teens. You know me made of digressions, and will therefore excuse this long one. After being so long rusticated, and used to quite a different manner of life, and style of conversation, you cannot imagine how I was struck with the difference, in manners, dress, and language, between the people I found here, and those whom I left behind. I speak singularly, for Mr. G. is not with me. We are building a new church, and an addition to our cottage, for the reception of these new comers who visit us so frequently, I mean the *bairns*. When my mate left me, he parted with such reluctance, and so many charges of quick return, that he reminded me of Milton's Adam on the fatal morning of the transgression.--To return to the garrisonians. You can imagine no set of people more polished, powdered, *tonified* and *englified*, than they are. That rage for elegance, that passion for shew, that frenzy for false refinement and
artificial

artificial luxury, which marks the age, burns here in full ardour. No wonder, when it has banished decorum, regularity, and decent frugality from the sober haunts of commerce, and even obtruded itself, with all its disquiets and dangers, into the more sacred asylums of rural tranquillity, that this passion triumphs here, where it has nothing to obstruct its progress; for the permanent parts of the community are so very idle, and so much accustomed to the company of a successive variety of military beaux, who arrive with fresh cargoes of vanity and fashionable impertinence, that the ladies here are as great adepts in the modish chit-chat, the modish games, &c. as any of their sisters in Grosvenor-square. Add to this, an assumed vivacity, and continual pretension to wit, supported by a mechanical giggle, which every one has equally at command. This, no doubt, is a caricature, which the splenetic turn of reflection, produced by retirement, with a sickly habit, has aggravated. But now for the reverse of the medal. These people are certainly pleasant, easy, and elegant, though not totally free from

from affectation. Then, considering they are so entirely unoccupied, and living so much together, 'tis wonderful to observe the harmony that prevails, and the decorum they observe towards each other. Even in absence, they have upon the whole less malignity and slander than any small society I ever knew or heard of. Though they have not warmth for real and tender friendship, yet their manners are so far smoothed and softened by that politeness which is the ape and substitute of benevolence, that they keep all rancour within decent bounds. Indeed they float down the tide of dissipation so quick, from one wave of amusement to another, that they cannot be much in earnest in their love or their anger. You will wonder who these residents are. They consist of the staff, four invalid companies, and a company of artillery. Dear peaceful home! where all is native and unsophisticated. This will make me more sensible of the value of my dominion there. - - - - - I have at last written to Harriet since my arrival here. I only deferred in hopes of sending some trifles, which might be serviceable. - - - - You know she is

in one sense very proud, and so are all people of great delicacy.

* * * * *

I never repined at my lot for want of any luxury, but the divine one, of bestowing where I love. - - - - Tell her what she will scarce believe, so jealous are the unfortunate, that she is as dear to me as ever, though I have not the means to convince her of it.—Tell me what sort of being Willy has chosen to divide his heart and loaf with.—I have a line from my sovereign just now, upbraiding my delay ; and charging me to meet him in his own Strathspey. I will stay there some days, having a grand visit to make. Adieu.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MRS. SMITH, LINT-HOUSE.

Laggan, Aug. 27, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE long Lint-house letter you promised me is not yet arrived. I have been for a

month at my *Lint-house*, alias Fort George ; where being in some measure disengaged from the perpetual hurry which always surrounds me at home. I find leisure to gratify the strong inclination I always feel, to write to you. Taking it for granted, that in the present case, you not only excuse but require egotism. I will endeavour to explain to you the nature of that bustle, and perplexity of affairs, which I complain of so often, and so justly. Having a great deal to do is not altogether the thing ; that, too, abridges my time for amusements of this nature ; but 'tis having a great deal to think of, to contrive, and to plan out, that plagues me. 'Tis acting in a variety of characters and capacities scarce compatible with each other. I must, after seven years experience, confess, with deep mortification, and due reverence for that exalted character, that the person who would be a notable housewife, must be that individual thing only, and not mar the main affair by an attempt to introduce separate and subordinate excellencies. She must not even, in any sense, be a tender wife, or attentive mother. She must not walk

walk about with her husband, or be his evening companion in conversation or other amusements; she must not spend her time in instructing her children, nor attend to the forming of their minds: their food, clothing, and health is all she must attend to. You Lowlanders have no idea of the complicated nature of Highland farming, and of the odd customs which prevail here. Formerly, from the wild and warlike nature of the men, and their haughty indolence, they thought no rural employment compatible with their dignity, unless, indeed, the plough. Fighting, hunting, lounging in the sun, music, and poetry, were their occupations; for the latter, though you would not think it, their language is admirably adapted. This naturally extended the women's province both of labour and management. The care of the cattle was peculiarly theirs. Changing their residence so often as they did in summer, from one bothy or glen to another, gave a romantic peculiarity to their turn of thought and language. Their manner of life, in fact, wanted nothing but the shades of palm, the olives,

the vines, and the fervid sun of the East, to resemble the patriarchal one. Yet, as they must carry their beds, food, and utensils, the housewife, who furnishes and divides these matters, has enough to do when her shepherd is in one glen, and her dairy-maid in another with her milk-cattle. Not to mention some of the children, who are marched off to the glen as a discipline, to inure them early to hardiness and simplicity of life. Meanwhile, his reverence, with my kitchen damsel and the ploughman, constitute another family at home, from which all the rest are flying detachments, occasionally sent out and recalled, and regularly furnished with provisions and forage. The effect, you know, often continues when the cause has ceased; the men are now civilized in comparison to what they were, yet the custom of leaving the weight of every thing on the more helpless sex continues, and has produced this one good effect, that they are from this habit less helpless and dependent. The men think they preserve dignity by this mode of management; the women find a degree of power or consequence in having
such

such an extensive department, which they would not willingly exchange for inglorious ease. What these occupations are, you cannot comprehend from a general description ; but, as it is an hour to breakfast-time, and I find myself in the humour of journalizing and particularizing, I shall, between fancy and memory, sketch out the diary of one July Monday. I mention Monday, being the day that all dwellers in glens come down for the supplies. Item, at four o'clock, Donald arrives with a horse loaded with butter, cheese, and milk. The former I must weigh instantly. He only asks an additional blanket for the children, a covering for himself ; two milk tubs, a cog, and another spoon, because little Peter threw one of the set in the burn ; two stone of meal, a quart of salt ; two pounds of flax for the spinners, for the grass continues so good that they will stay a week longer. He brings the intelligence of the old sow's being the joyful mother of a dozen pigs, and requests something to feed her with. All this must be ready in an hour ; before the conclusion of which comes Ronald, from the

high hills, where our sheep and young horses are all summer, and only desires meal, salt, and women with shears, to clip the lambs, and tar to smear them. He informs me that the black mare has a foal, a very fine one ; but she is very low, and I must instantly send one to bring her to the meadows. Before he departs, the tenants who do us services come ; they are going to stay two days in the oak wood, cutting timber for our new byre, and must have a competent provision of bread, cheese, and ale for the time they stay. Then I have Caro's breakfast to get, Janet's hank to reel, and a basket of clues to dispatch to the weaver ; K—'s lesson to hear, her sampler to rectify ; and all must be over before eleven : while his reverence, calm and regardless of all this bustle, wonders what detains me, urging me out to walk, while the soaring larks, the smiling meadows, and opening flowers, second the invitation ; and my imagination, if it gets a moment loose from care, kindles at these objects with all the eagerness of youthful enthusiasm. My tottering constitution, my faded form and multiplying

multiplying cares, are all forgotten, and I enjoy the pause from keen exertion, as others do gaiety and mirth. How happy, in my circumstances, is that versatile and sanguine temper, which is hoping for a rainbow in every cloud ; nay, so prevalent is this disposition, that were a fire to break out in the offices, and burn them all down, I dare say the first thing that would occur to me, would be to console myself by considering how much ground would be manured by all these fine ashes. Now I will not plague you with a detail of the whole day, of which the above is a competent specimen. Yet spare your pity ; for this day is succeeded by an evening so sweetly serene, our walk by the river is so calmly pleasing, our lounge by the burnside so indolently easy, our conversation in the long-wished for hour of leisure so interesting, sliding so imperceptibly from grave to gay ; and then our children ! Say you wish me more ease and leisure, but do not pity me. Pity with me is like advice with some ; I am readier to give than to take it. Adieu ! dear and true friend.

LETTER XXV.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, Sept. 5, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE just had the pleasure of your short, and Mrs. Brown's longer letter. You have not been good *bairns* this summer. Have you not the grace to consider this is my hurried season? Could I command time, you would be teased with my redundancies. Indeed I have nothing to send you from hence very interesting to town belles. Yet what maketh us to differ, to use Mrs. Hervy's apposite phrase, if we, with our long-established friendship, find no more to interest us in each other, than people incapable of that generous sentiment? Why is spleen, or, to use a more fashionable word, *ennui*, the peculiar disease of fine ladies and fine gentlemen, but because they, of all mortals, cannot have their minds stirred up, and kept in motion, by any thing but what relates

relates to their darling selves? Avarice and vanity are the passions which, by turns, sway and agitate them. The card-table exercises the one, and a rotation of public places, filled, as they think, with their admirers, the other. Languor, apathy, and the horrors, fill up, by turns, the dismal interval. How different is the case with those whom the polite world regards with pity, as beings lost in oblivion, &c. &c. because their cares and pleasures are confined to their own family and particular friends! Yet how animated, how endearing is that circle, to those capable of tasting it with unvitiated relish, with genuine truth, and warmth of feeling! The eye cannot turn, without meeting with the expression of reverence, sympathy, or tenderness, in some countenance we love; the most ordinary occurrence excites hopes and fears, pleasure or disquiet, because it must in some degree, affect those who engross and animate our wishes. Hay-making is not merely drying grass; it is preparing a scene of joyous employment and innocent amusement for those whose sports recal to us our gayest, happiest days.

Planting is not merely raising shrubs or trees, so familiar that they excite no new pleasurable idea; it is preparing shelter, and unfolding beauties, for those human blossoms, whose dawning sweetness, whether real or imaginary, we contemplate with blameless rapture. Excuse this rhapsody. 'Tis an attempt at contrasting a life of what is thought harmless dissipation, with that peaceful privacy, where the voice of the heart is heard, and attended to.—Why do you not tell me what kind of a wife Jenny makes? whether she takes maternal consequence to herself; who that was ill is grown better, and who that was wicked has repented; who has begun to go to sermons on week days, and who has left off attending them on Sundays? We have been, by turns so moral and playful, that, now our name is up, if we should deal a little in censure and tittle-tattle, we can go on, and keep our credit, on the strength of past good behaviour. Where is Dunlop-street, and what sort of a house have you in it? and do you still keep Watts on the Passions beside you, by way of precaution; and do you con-
tinue

tinue your laudable attention to the *wee* prophets, or do you not rather tell them, in these busy days, that, “at a more convenient season, you will hear them?” You see how present, all past mirth and sorrow, sports and seriousness, are to me; yet you will gravely talk of my neglecting you, ungrateful being as you are.

* * * * *

I give you this commission, to me important, because, I think, if a suitable place could be found for my charge*, she might improve in many respects; and I should flatter myself, that going now and then to public places, and associating with other young people, will cheer her dejected spirits, and prevent her taking a turn too thoughtful for her age. I would wish her to pass four or

* The young lady here alluded to, and who is frequently mentioned afterwards, by the name of Charlotte, was a relation of the minister of Laggan, in whose family she for many years found a home. She was much admired for beauty of countenance, and singular elegance, both of person and manners, in which dignity and softness were happily blended; while in her mind the soundest sense and firmest rectitude supported and directed each other.

five months in town, and return to me in summer. Adieu, in haste, my dear friend. Mr. G. has learnt to think of you as I do, and sends his love. Dispose of mine where you know it due.—Farewell again.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MRS. BROWN,

(formerly Miss JANE EWING.)

Laggan, October 10, 1788.

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN!

I WILL lose no time in thanking you for the very friendly and interesting part you take in all that concerns me, of which I have a recent proof in your attention to poor Charlotte's concerns. If I live till the time of her return, next year, I hope to have the pleasure of telling you in person, somewhere or other, how affectionate a sense I retain of all your kindness. You seem so engrossed with this same *Caro* of yours, that you appear quite unconcerned in what

passes round you, and never give a word of *nouvelles* to one who languishes in obscurity, and moreover, in total ignorance of what the Clydesdale world is doing ; which is all the world to me. If you did but know how it renews my youth, and awakens *the light of my soul*, to recollect

“ Those happy days, beyond recovery fled !”

Not that the present are unhappy, or at all so inanimate as you may imagine. If you would tell what you are all about, I would, for instance, tell you how the bard of bards, who reached the mouldy harp of Ossian from the withered oak of Selma, and awakened the song of other times, is now moving, like a bright meteor, over his native hills ; and while the music of departed bards awakes the joy of grief, the spirits of departed warriors lean from their bright clouds to hear, and a thousand lovely maids descend from the hill of roes, and pour forth the tears of beauty to the woes of Malvina ; while the fair mourner of Lutha rejoices in the presence of her love, to hear his fame resound once more from Albion’s cliffs to the green vales of Erin, &c. &c. &c. The
bard,

bard, as I was about to tell you, is as great a favourite of fortune as of fame, and has got more by the old harp of Ossian, than most of his predecessors could draw out of the silver strings of Apollo. He has bought three small estates in this country within these two years, given a ball to the ladies, and made other exhibitions of wealth and liberality. He now keeps a Hall at Belleville, his new-purchased seat, where there are as many shells as were in Selma, filled, I doubt not, with much better liquor. - - - - -

I make no apology for haste and inaccuracy. 'Tis a fine harvest-day, and I write with my son in my lap. Adieu, my dear friend. Accept *our* best wishes for your chosen, and assure him I consider him as a new and near connexion.

I am always much yours.

LETTER XXVII.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, December 25, 1788.
(Ink frozen by the fire.)

FESTIVALS I always choose for writing to you, for then I am at leisure. Doubly so to-day, for my lord and sovereign is out, at a meeting of country gentlemen, and has left me here starving in such intense weather, as none but ultra-Grampians have any conception of.—I hope Charlotte has given you my Dalwhinny epistle; a very meritorious one too, considering what a cold vigil I kept to write it. I long much to hear how far she answers to the sketch I gave you of her. If I were less happy in my family, I should be inconsolable for want of her. Even the *inexhaustible* fund of *entertainment* I possess in them, can scarce alleviate my chagrin for her departure. She, to whose mind early sorrow had given early ripeness, was unusually domestic and companionable. Her having no great com-
pafs

pass of acquired knowledge, or powers of imagination, was rather an advantage in our retirement; because she could attend to common things, and be interested in such occurrences, as a person soaring in the balloon of romantic elevation could not descend to. Then she has a very pleasing vein of humour, which I would call peculiar, but that it in some degree resembles Caro's. She has not his singular vein of delicate irony, but rallies very like him; and, like him too, is very much awake to the ludicrous, and very quick-sighted in detecting all pretensions. She is, like him too, invariably true, neither deceived nor deceiving. Sound judgment, indeed, is the *forte* of these relations. When I take a flight into the ideal world, it must be a solitary one. People at her age are generally too much engrossed with views and schemes, for that new scene which seems to open wide and boundless before them in the world, to settle their giddy minds to that calm and rational enjoyment which time and experience teach us to value. She is always present and at home, hopeless of admiration. I was not bewildered in the usual way;

way ; but, though loving as I did an occasional excursion beyond this cloudy region, I think I too could always claim the merit of sitting very quiet in the chimney corner. Indeed I find, that tranquillity of temper is very useful in the lot which Providence has appointed for me. This is not the region of select society, yet by no means lonely. One meets with people willing to please, not deficient in point of understanding, and having manners superior to expectation, when you consider everything. I should, perhaps, enjoy their society more, if what I have at home were less pleasing. No one can be more sensible than I am of what I possess in this respect. Yet there is no perfection. Affection, delicacy, and discernment, may have their excesses. As there is no pure happiness in this region of shadows, mine is not without alloys and interruptions ; not merely such as are common to every one, but some peculiarly my own. - - - - - And yet my advantages are such, that I should be wretched without them ; and my drawback, such as I can bear without repining, and trust, in time, to conquer without any mighty effort.—
Alas !

Alas ! how sadly does my reluctant heart assent to your too just observation ! This is, indeed, the time our children will afford us most pleasure. Should wealth and honour be scattered in their paths, should their merit attain applause and distinction from surrounding multitudes, still they will be weaned from our arms, never more to dwell in them with pleasure, and depend on us for happiness ; never more will they read their hopes and fears, their rewards and punishments, in our eyes. Oh happy obscurity ! that hides the future from us. Happy they, who are not appointed to drain the dregs of life, to outlive those they love, or, what is ten times worse, to see them become unworthy of their love !

“ Spare my eyes, my heart the last.”

Adieu.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MRS. BROWN.

Laggan, March 9, 1789.

* * * * *

As low as you rate your critical abilities, they have altogether captivated and dazzled my good man. He desires me to keep the letter for my girls, to moderate the poignant affliction they will feel, some time hence, in weeping over Werter. He considers this pathetic hero as a weak though amiable enthusiast, and looks upon Charlotte as first cousin to a coquette. Albert is his hero. With him he sympathizes, and for him he feels, more than for the lover of Nature and of Charlotte. I execrate the plan, detest the example, reprobate the reasoning, shudder at the catastrophe, and am most perniciously charmed with that vivid colouring, that fervid glow of sentiment, that energy of thought, and that simple unadorned pathos, which, without a pomp of sounds, penetrates and melts the very soul. In all his afflictions, I was afflicted. Yes, with

with all his agonizing horror, I saw the dreadful brink, saw the last pang of dissolution, "like a flash of lightning, illumine the dark gulf of futurity;" but it was lost in a moment in impenetrable obscurity; nothing remained but the lime trees, beneath whose shade he wished to rest, and the silent grave, where

"Pity trembles while it weeps."

Do not laugh at me for catching a spark of Werter's enthusiasm, amidst so many cares and children. Judge from thence its fatal effects, at an earlier period of life, on

"A heart oppress'd with love and grief:"

Its destructive tendency, in representing people worthy, amiable, and enlightened, cherishing destructive errors, shutting their eyes to visible consequences, and inflicting misery on others as well as themselves, by the indulgence of feelings, ambiguous even in their dawn. Without one exertion of fortitude to conquer them, without any generous regard for the peace of others, without indeed that disinterested attention to the future peace of the person beloved, which true affection should produce in a
pure

pure and elevated mind, these selfish lovers go to the precipice of destruction with the gross and vulgar subterfuge, that while the person is inviolate, no rights are invaded. I have some compassion for Werter, but very little indeed for Charlotte. In all points of delicacy, a woman of a mind at once cultivated and untainted, is a natural judge. Such a mind repels the idea of a divided affection, of giving to the fond and faithful lover, possessed of her earliest affections, what fond and faithful love will spurn at with disdain, chill esteem, and half-hidden sentiments. Yet, this is the person we are taught to admire, and to consider as having a slight blemish lost in a blaze of excellence, and atoned for by unavailing remorse. Yet, after treating these hazardous Platonics with due severity, I will tell you in a whisper, what I think the better tendencies of this novel: It depicts nature truly, very truly indeed; for, when I read the short letter, expressing his rapture at the discovery of his favourite fountain, where he says, "Fairies and genii seem to hover over it," &c. I felt my early days renewed;

renewed ; having on such occasions, in the morning of life, felt the very same sensations, and gone about restless with the desire of meeting some one who could derive as much joy from as simple causes. I am sure I have loved particular spots as well as some people are capable of loving those dearest to them. There is no wonderful adventure, no splendid scenes shewn to dazzle and mislead the imagination ; no sudden accession of wealth to make those happy, to whom heaven has allotted happiness, with which wealth has no connexion. Sentiment may have slain its thousands ; but has not vanity slain its ten thousands ? The great danger of novel reading, is a restless desire to be seen and admired, kindled by the surprising adventures of the heroines, the wonderful events which the admiration excited by their beauty produces, and the splendid destiny which generally awaits them. It is this that makes young people so impatient of peace and retirement, so sick of the plain realities of common life. In Werter, there is no exaggerated description, no unnatural or inflated language, no

10 gilding

gilding or glitter. You feel always at home, and find yourself among such people as you daily meet; and it is this truth of painting that communicates the strong interest we feel in the persons, while our judgment is in arms against their conduct. It is the manchineel tree, whose apples attract us as much by their resemblance to the fruits of the same form, as by their superior beauty. We go with the ease of familiarity to repose under it, though its shadow is danger, and its fruit destruction. I have said so much of Werter, that I shall refer all I would say of myself to another letter. Judge how our imaginations have been impressed, when I tell you, Werter has enlarged our phraseology. Last October, the Spey very often inundated the valley we inhabit; the various weather that caused this overflow, occasioned many of those nights in which the moon bursts out, and vanishes by turns in total gloom. This partial light makes our mountain scenery appear very awful, and the tremulous effulgence on the wide expanse of troubled waters heightens the effect. These we familiarly called *Wetter* nights.

nights. You cannot but remember the horrors of his nocturnal rambles, while meditating the perpetration of “a deed without a name.”—Rejoice that my critical quiver is emptied, and believe me your unchanged and unchangeable friend.

LETTER XXIX.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

May 16, 1789.

“PITY me, O my friend! for the hand of God hath touched me; touched me to the very quick, and that in a manner so utterly unexpected, I feel still like a person stunned by a thunder-bolt, beginning to pant for breath, and look about to see what I have left, and to feel for what I have lost. I know I need not have recourse to declamation to interest your tenderest sympathy. You know that the dear creature, it has pleased the Almighty to deprive me of, was my pride and my delight. The spirit and animation

mation of that fine countenance no one ever beheld without being struck with its marked expression; and that fair promise of every human excellence which dawned through every word and action, his fond parents viewed with secret exultation! Ask Charlotte if I exaggerate, or if ever she saw such manliness, generosity, and tenderness, appear in a child. There was nothing he dreaded like giving me a moment's pain. O! what have we lost? But what has he escaped by this early removal! Ripening, as he was, for immortality, he lived more in these four short years than most children do in ten. He walked, spoke, thought, and felt sooner than any child I ever saw or heard of.

“Why wanders wretched thought about his tomb,
In infidel distress?”—

I know the vanity of these fond, foolish recollections. I know how well it becomes a christian to render his own gifts meekly to the Divine Giver, when demanded. This, and a great deal more, is often and easily said. Nay, I could say it all myself, but nature will have her way. When Mary II. of England was on her death-bed, early

VOL. II. H finishing

finishing a pious and exemplary life with a suitable conclusion, she, having been asked if any of the various remedies she took did her good, answered, that nothing did her good but prayer. I may say something like this; but, alas! my efforts to seek this relief are, like my dear child, cold, dead, inanimate!—the heart speaks not, moves not, under the oppressive weight. Here is great room for censure. Be it so. It is not your approbation, but your sympathy that I solicit. When I wrote last I dreaded the measles; John took them, but very favourably; we had not the least apprehension for this darling. - - - - -

* * * * *

Excuse my dwelling on minutiae so dear to my remembrance. Yet how shall I speak of the three following days? or, how procure some oblivious draught, to wash them for ever from my remembrance? The unspeakable pains he then endured still press upon my heart. Yet he was sensible to the last minute, expressed pity and tenderness for us by words, and then by signs, when his speech grew languid and imperfect, As, he

he became weaker he grew calm, and, at length, expired,

“As soft as balm, as mild as air.”

At six in the morning, May 12th, this human wonder forsook its earthly prison, and mingled with its kindred angels. We saw him depart without a tear. Now we can weep, and that is some relief. O pray for us! Adieu!—I pity poor Charlotte, to whom our beloved child was very dear, and she thinks and feels deeper than most people. I have announced *her* loss to her, for such I know she considers it.

LETTER XXX.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, May 26, 1891.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

WERE you as happy as your great worldly prosperity, the esteem of all that know you truly, can make you, you would be very unfit to enter into the present feelings of my heart; these acute returns of pain, these

H 2. agonizing

agonizing recollections, that darken the summer's sun, and throw a veil of universal sadness over the fair face of nature;—the recital of such sensations would form poor entertainment for a person engrossed or elated by the pleasures and gaities of this world.—Since writing the above, I went to Fort George, by *particular desire*; but, alas! I found, to my sorrow, that “change of place is only change of pain.” The regiment in which my father served during the years of my childhood, and to which he is still much attached, he imagined would interest me; but whether it be that the habit of a retired life has made me think differently from what I used to do, or that my mind is entirely engrossed with one sad and tender idea, I see them not as old friends, but merely as worldlings fluttering after trifles. I am now at home, after spending a dreary month at the Fort, without being awake to any thing but poor C. We thought she would be the better for change of air and salt water. Her rapid growth enervates her. We have brought your relation home with us. . . . Charlotte will be home this week. I am
relieved

relieved at the thought of it. To her I dare talk fully of what is ever in my thoughts. With her I can venture to feed my insatiable sorrow, with every little anecdote and recollection that will serve to keep his dear memory alive. His father, though he cannot get over it himself, blames me very justly for repining at my darling's happiness. I will not be surprised or angry, though you should reprove me for this extravagance; but I am not well; and returning here, I find my beloved child's image in every place, in some of those lively and striking attitudes which were almost peculiar to himself. I cannot go to the door without seeing the spot where the cold earth covers that lovely countenance, which I never could behold without an emotion of pleasure, only exceeded by my present anguish. Happily I have preserved his dear profile, taken when he was out of humour. His sensible frown adds strength to the expression of the most animated countenance I ever beheld. I do not acknowledge your kindness to Charlotte. I do not answer a sentence of your most affectionate letter, which I thankfully re-

ceived a month ago. I can speak of nothing but the only thing I think of. Do not think I neglect the only method of procuring true consolation. I earnestly implore strength to bear my sorrows; but I am not able to pray, or wish, in any degree, to enable me to forget the object of them—his remembrance is so sweet to my soul, and my aspirations after a re-union with him, where we shall part no more, are so consequently strong. Pray read Dr. Gregory's Comparative View, &c. and observe particularly the last section on the influence of religion; that on taste; and the strictures on false refinement. I long to have you share the entertainment they afforded to my happier hours. A letter from you is almost the only thing I could read now. Write amply; give me good accounts of Mr. B—; and believe you are one of the few that still interest me. Farewell!

LETTER XXXI.

TO MRS. SMITH.

Laggan, August 3, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WEEK after week has elapsed without my gratifying myself by writing to you, or being able to assign a good reason. I shall assign the true one ; which, at the same time, I own I cannot justify. When I received your letter, in which you animadvert, very justly, on the folly, not to say guilt, of wasting that time and thought in fruitless mourning for the dead, which ought to be employed in useful attention to those who are left, I was ashamed to discover the state of my mind even to you ; and from you how could I conceal it ? Truth is, my mind has been either wound up to a pitch, at which it could not long remain, or sunk in the deepest dejection. - -

* * * * *

But in vain do I weary and exhaust my worn-out spirits in pursuit of a vision that

eludes my grasp. Alas ! I must turn my eyes to objects more attainable, and more suited to my situation, and the ties that still hold me to this world. I must again run the round of earthly cares and low pursuits, and wait patiently till my appointed day come. For I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. A late alarm, from another part of my family, convinced me forcibly of my own weakness and inconsistency. The grief which I could neither soothe or reason down, grew more tolerable on being divided. A bright atmosphere, a busy scene, and the affectionate attention of a pleasing and easy companion, did more to relieve my mind than all that reason or reflection could suggest. I always think of him, but with more composure. I view him as having passed the fiery trial of suffering, and as regarding us with tender compassion. The first thing that alleviated my distress was Charlotte's return, in itself pleasing, but still more gratifying, as her minute details about you all, made you in a manner visible and present to us. This suspended the sense of pain, by renewing the pleasing remembrance of the
the

the innocent happy hours we formerly passed together. My youngest boy had got a hurt, the consequences of which alarmed us, but he is now better. Our busy season coming on, and finding myself incapable of any steady application within doors, I sent his maid to the hay-making, and wandered out a good deal with him in my arms. In consequence of this exertion, I have found exercise in the open air operates beyond any thing towards the relief of depression of spirits. Long may it be before you require any such remedy for that heaviest of evils ! I have been indeed very little within, till of late that the bad weather has confined me.

I have thought much of what you say of a certain friend of mine being in danger of running into the extreme of enthusiasm ; but, after all, cannot think the hazard very serious, though I have *paused* and *pondered* sufficiently on the subject. The fact is, that it is in vain for us to flatter ourselves, that the great work of our salvation is a bye concern, for which we may occasionally set aside a few minutes, which, by chance, are left vacant from business or pleasures. This

does not agree with the opinion which the wise and good in all ages, and of all persuasions, seem to have entertained (however different their degrees of light and intelligence) viz. that our manner of existing here is not the final end of our being ; that this is merely a state of probation, in which there is a glimmering of light afforded us, barely sufficient to distinguish good and evil ; and a degree of choice and judgment, just enough to enable us to make a selection, and hold by the best. Were our intellect strong enough to discern the lucid order, and according harmony of the divine scheme of Providence in its full extent ; could the horrors of guilt, and its consequent punishment, be made visible through the thick veil of humanity, or could weak mortal eyes bear the refulgence of celestial beauty ; there could be no room for choice or hesitation, no exercise of fortitude, discernment, faith or hope, no struggles betwixt the erring will and the love of rectitude. Creatures left without choice, and impelled by the clear and glaring certainty before them, not struggling up the hill to virtue and felicity,

but swimming with the stream in torpid ease could not exercise those virtues, which our imperfect state so loudly calls for. All the noble exertions, all the softer emotions, of the mind, lose their meaning and their use, where there is no vice to combat, no distress to relieve, no weakness to protect. All this is so like common-place, that you must consider me as digressing very widely. Yet the perpetual struggle and warfare with guilt and sorrow, which is evidently our appointed task and duty here, leaves little room to suppose that any body can be righteous over much. We see our duty imperfectly in this land of shades and apparitions. Thus much, however, we are certain of, that we walk continually on the brink of danger in the open paths of life. If not happier, those are certainly safer, who, in some measure, fly from the conflict. What do people pursue in the world but business or pleasure? The regulation of the mind, and the exertion of that active beneficence which true piety produces, form such an occupation to a mind so turned, as to exercise all its faculties in the most agreeable manner. With those

who have made great advances in piety, I should suppose "perfect love casteth out fear;" and that these exercises become a source of pure and lasting pleasure, as incomprehensible to the children of this world, as colours to the blind. Enthusiasm is the wine of life; it cheers and supports the mind; though excess, in either case, produces intoxication and madness. I am not sure that the religion of the heart can exist without a certain degree of enthusiasm. What noble or tender emotion of the mind is excited in any great degree without producing it? Very few affix a precise or determinate idea to the word, used in a religious sense. You will hear many people, who have never thought about the matter, parrotizing about enthusiasm, when they mean bigotry or fanaticism, if, indeed, they mean any thing. Religion has not so great an enemy upon earth as vanity; and no wonder, since true piety must needs be founded in deep humility. Wealth, power, and distinction cannot be attained by all the vain and ambitious; but the prize of wit and wisdom seems always within reach to those determined to be wise
or

or witty. Those who wish to purchase these distinctions as cheap as possible, exchange the principles they only seemed to possess, for the character of wit and talents they only seemed to acquire. They hear impious wit oftenest quoted by the thoughtless and dissipated, and, therefore, they think impiety necessarily implies wit, and are indeed very often incapable of distinguishing the one from the other. These are the people who so frequently talk with contempt and ridicule of enthusiasm, in the religious sense of that expression, as they *misunderstand* it. I have been very serious, and, as generally turns out in that case, very tedious; but some late instances that I have met with, of absurd pretensions to wit, founded on still more absurd pretensions to infidelity, have really provoked me; especially, as I very well know this pretender believes and trembles in the dark. For his impiety he must account to his Maker; but his impertinent ostentation is an offence against society. I suppose you are very glad that I am going to bid you good night. I fancy you will think, after giving you this lecture on impiety, the

next

next thing I shall set about will be to caution bees and ants against idleness, or our friend W. D. against too much gravity and austerity. I don't know whether you will be the better for reading this, but I am much the better for writing it, and that you will think a sufficient apology. Adieu! my dear; I have taken the declamation, and left action to you. Be ever what you have been, and I shall be at no loss for an example to illustrate some of my sage precepts.

LETTER XXXII.

TO MRS. BROWN, GLASGOW.

Loggan, Aug 13, 1789.

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN!

I AM such an œconomist of your pence, that I have deferred my sincere and cordial congratulations all this time, in hopes of getting them sent by one who has cheated me at last. Yet this is the only testimony in my power to give of the unabated friendship I shall always retain for you, and
this

this is simply all ; for, with me, despondency and ill health have been so constantly producing and reproducing each other, for some time past, that I have neither the power nor inclination to furnish you with the least degree of entertainment. Charlotte and I were all last week on a tour of visits on Loch Laggan side, where the romantic singularity of the place, and peculiar turn of its sequestered inhabitants, might, in happier hours, have afforded a subject for amusing description : As it is, I can only say, that the rocks and woods which border this fine piece of water, are equally gloomy and magnificent ; while the spot where we spent most of our allotted days, can be equalled by few in a singular assemblage of rural beauties. The deep silence which surrounds you, in a place secluded even from the Highland world, and distant from every other human dwelling, affords leisure to contemplate the placid features of the scene around the house. This, from a small eminence, surveys a meadowy plain, bordering on the lake, in which large trees have been left here and there, producing a very fine effect.

effect to the eye. Through this extended meadow, a stream, delightfully pure, wanders over fine gravel, while you trace its progress by the copses of hazle and alder, vocal with the sweetest strain of woodland melody, and rich in all the smaller wild fruits that abound in this district. In the immediate scene you are soothed with every thing that is beautiful, and in the surrounding ones, awed by all that is majestic. The lofty *Coryarder*, the haunt of eagles and of clouds, towers behind; before, the lake spreads its still expanse; opposite, the dark remains of the most ancient forest in Scotland borders the whole east side of the lake, above it rises a mountain wooded almost to the top; and beyond these awful solitudes appear rocks, at whose barren desolation the mind revolts. Of the inhabitants of this recess, I can only say, that they are peaceful and industrious, and seem as mild and harmless as the sheep, who are the sole subjects of this realm of solitude, I should tell you, that the lake contains two small wooded islands, on which are some fragments of buildings of the most remote antiquity. One is called the Isle of Kings ;
the

the other that of Dogs ; for there, it would appear, their Caledonian majesties, who had here a hunting seat, used to confine Bran and Luath, and all their other followers of the chace. It was hay-making time ; we worked at our needles, or wandered at will, all the long sun-shine day, in the haunt of roes. In the evening, we had regularly a party on the water, and music. You start, but I am correct. When our landlord's sons had work'd till tea-time, they came in to rest, and whenever tea was over, they launched out their boat, which two of them rowed to the opposite side of the lake, while the third played, on the violin, some of our favourite old tunes, that brought you and your music full on my recollection. But we were not merely regaled with airy sounds ; the central gloom of the ancient forest abounds in bilberries, strawberries, &c. &c ; and having others with us to hasten the task of gathering, we left the youths fishing, returned by twilight, and supped on the trout they caught, the fruit we gathered, and richer cream than ever your Lowland eyes beheld. This literally pastoral excursion

has

has set my pen in motion beyond my own expectations ; for I have so far lost the knack of writing upon nothing, which you once ascribed to me, that I seem now no longer able to write on any thing.

Where I possessed of descriptive talents, Charlotte's extravagant joy, on the birth of your son, would give full room for their display. As for me, the moral and melancholy turn which my thoughts have lately taken, leads me to associate even the cradle with the grave, its sure, however distant successor.

"Birth's feeble cry, and death's deep dismal groan," are very properly connected by our favourite plaintive bard ; whom, by the bye, I am told it is not now the fashion to admire. Dear Jenny, continue to love me, till I learn "the last new fashion of the heart," till I cease to have a taste and feelings of my own, and, to be in some measure guided by them. I wonder when it will be the fashion to regret that the grass is not blue, or the skies green.—Pray bestow the charity of a letter upon me very soon. A little time from you will now be valued like
the

the widow's mite, because you can ill spare it,—I heartily condole with Mrs. ———, on the loss of her son, which will wound her pride, as well as her more tender feelings ; for I suppose she was vain of having him. I too, was vain once, but my vanity, I hope, is buried with the cause of it. Charlotte, whose love of infancy is most inordinate, regrets that she is not with you, to assist in nursing your heir. Mr. G. joins me in warm and sincere wishes, that he may be a long continued blessing to you both ; and, with best respects to his father, let me add a caution which painful experience dictates—Love him with moderation, as we ought to do every earthly thing. Make my best wishes to your brothers and their mates, and thank the latter for me, on Charlotte's account.

I am, my dear Mrs. Brown, with much affection,

Yours.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Laggan, Dec. 23. 1789.

MADAM,

THOUGH I feel a desire of expressing to you, in some degree, the deep sense we all have of the generous part you have acted towards Miss Grant, I own I am at a loss how to do justice to my own sentiments on that subject, without running the risk of wounding your delicacy, or falling into the beaten track of unmeaning compliment. This I know has, by frequent misapplication, lost its value and significance. Yet I am sure no person, capable of acting as you have done on this occasion, can be at a loss to judge how people must be touched with a kindness of the most essential importance, done them in that instance, where they feel it most tenderly; and this by a person, whose

whose character (the only thing we know of you) is such, as makes protection and advice doubly valuable, and thoroughly to be depended on. The partial light in which we view this object of our greatest earthly solitude, endeared to us by innocence, misfortune, and a thorough knowledge of her disposition, led us to hope for the kind offices and good wishes of every well-disposed person. But it required a very liberal and superior mind indeed, to take so clear and just a view of objects so remote and detached. We will not take all the credit of doing, as you seem to think, what no one else would have done. Your present conduct convinces me that, in our place, you would have acted just as we did ; but I am not, by any means, so clear that we, in your place, should have done as you did. Uncommon and disinterested exertions in the cause of virtue, by people who live in the world, are efforts like swimming against the current. Recluses, like us, walk in the light which emanates from the unbiaſſed mind, and seek or hope no other approbation than the whispered plaudit

plaudit of the gratified heart. In this case we have more; we are doubly rewarded, by the distinguished merit of the object of our cares, and the daily improvements that mark her progress in knowledge and in virtue.

Her reception in the family of her worthy relation, Mr. Douglas*, is a circumstance every way favourable to her. Every motive of prudence and gratitude conspire to make it highly proper for her to sacrifice her own views and inclinations to the slightest indication of their will. The circle of acquaintance she made, when she went to town, though not wide, nor perhaps highly fashionable, was among people of real worth and estimation, to whom she owes much for civility and most useful attention. These it would be most indelicate and ungrateful

* Mr. John Douglas, of Glasgow, was nearly related to this justly admired young person; and there a most affectionate intimacy began betwixt her and his daughter, now Mrs. Douglas, of Douglas Park.

in her to drop. Yet it will not be proper in her to go any where without their full approbation (I mean the Douglas's). How to act or apologize in this or any delicate case, I am sure she will be directed by your candid advice.

Mr. G. and Charlotte join in offering our most grateful respects to you and good Mr. Macintosh, &c. &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO MRS. BROWN.

Laggan, Feb. 13, 1790.

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN!

I HAVE deferred writing to you this long time, waiting the return of as much strength and spirits as should enable me to do it with some degree of fulness and precision. Though somewhat better, I am far from well, and
have

have been this week past crowded with people coming to take leave of the young travellers, who go to-morrow. In the first place, my mind is perfectly at ease with regard to the deposit I am about to place in your hands ; so much so, that I shall never think of giving you directions about it, convinced that, at this time of life, and in this stage of education, your judgment is far more to be depended on than my own. The arduous task of forming her heart, and instilling into her mind principles of moral rectitude and devout submission to the source of all goodness, is, I hope, in some degree performed. She is docile, and willing to please, without the least tincture of levity on the one hand, or self-conceit and stubbornness on the other. You will find her disposed to pay you implicit obedience, on the best of principles, that of an interior conviction, that you will only order what is right. It only remains for me to hint at the defects I observed, yet durst not blame, in her past education, in which I have had little share.

* * * * *

Experience has taught me the evil of this. Kept constantly to my needle (of which application many trophies remain) I was childishly ignorant of every thing else when I got the charge of a family.

* * * * *

But I have employed her in this manner all winter, and find her so ashamed of deficiency, and willing to please and be useful, that I hope she will conquer all indolent habits. While absent from us, she was shut up with old people, without a companion, or any relaxation but what books afforded; in these she took refuge, and in these found consolation: but they were taken without choice or selection. She has, from a kind of necessity, read more, and perhaps reflected and digested more, than any Miss of her age you know. There is a certain thoughtful indolence, a degree of over-refinement, and an indifference towards ordinary characters, and common, though very useful things, to be feared, as the result of much knowledge early acquired.

This is more especially to be feared in a mind that unites a degree of masculine solidity and habits of reflection, with the quickness and sensibility common to the sex ; and such are generally those female minds that range beyond the usual limits in search of knowledge and entertainment. However, we need not much fear ; when our pupil enters her teens, and acquires the love of dress, and thirst for amusement natural to that period, all this may scatter like morning mists. I do not however, wish her to read much at this time ; and what she does read, I wish to be of a moral and serious cast. Let her write, dance, and attend a geographical class, with Mr. S—'s children. Drawing and music are both out of the question : she has neither ear for the one, nor that turn of fancy which leads to excellence in the other. Tinkling and daubing are tolerable amusements for the superabundant leisure of the wealthy, who have the means, as far as possible, to make art supply the defects of nature ; but I would not waste time and money in swimming against the stream, were it but to prevent

prevent the painful hypocrisy of those who are forced, from mere compassion, to “d—n with faint praise” miserable music, and wretched drawing. I despise the fashionable frippery of fillagree, which neither displays taste, nor forms habits of attention and diligence. Needle-work, good old court needle-work, is the thing. It exercises fancy, fixes attention, and, by perseverance and excellence in it, habituates the mind to patient application, and to those peaceful and still-life pleasures, which form the chief enjoyment of every truly amiable woman. *Ton* is an epidemical frenzy, that follows and overtakes us every where, though we in following it can overtake it no where. Would you believe it is partly to shun this, that I was impatient to send your *protégée* from her former abode, which is become gay and fashionable, in as great excess as this is retired and rusticated.

* * * * *

To remove her by such a quick transition from absolute retirement to the *beau monde*, would be destructive to all my views, whose object it is to bring up my children in the

utmost frugality, simplicity, and industry ; and at the same time give them that culture of mind, and inspire them with that propriety and elegance of sentiment, which will dignify a blameless and virtuous obscurity, if that should be their lot, and form their manners to such softness and decorum as would not disgrace a more easy situation, if Providence were pleased to bestow it upon them. You ask, how people secluded from the world are to acquire manner. I answer, that where there is mind, there is always manner ; and when they are accustomed to treat each other with gentleness and courtesy, they will feel that quick disgust at what is rude and inelegant, which contributes more than any instruction to the refinement of manners. I am sure this homily has worn out your patience. I regret exceedingly that your sister is out of town, because I could wish M— to be with her every moment she should be absent from you, except a few formal visits, which she may make to some of my old acquaintance. Children at her age can hardly be considered as making any part of the company, being

being rather an incumbrance. They however amuse themselves, and enlarge their circle of ideas by being present in mixed companies ; but in general I think they are more improved by being with those they know best and can be easy with, because they are more interested, and attend more to their conversation. I am but too sensible of the task I impose, and the trouble I occasion you : but you know not how desirous I am to have her in a private family. More I will not say ; for it avails not to tease you with apologies. - - - - - With true esteem and unbounded confidence,

I am yours most sincerely.

LETTER XXXV.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, February, 5, 1791.

MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

I OWN it ; our correspondence did, for a while, languish on my side. But what has

not this interruption cost me ! and how various and painful were the causes of it ! I have written, and inquired again and again, without success*. I shall, however, make this last effort to discover whether my dearest Anne is still a fellow-traveller through this vale of shadows ; or, whether I am to consider her as one of those separated spirits, whom tremulous hope and fond imagination flatter us with recognizing, at some future period, in holier, happier regions ; for I will not, cannot suppose you capable of neglecting, flighting, or even forgetting me.

Had my last letter reached you, I am certain you would have answered it. Even my unavailing friendship was worth gratitude ; because it was very warm and very true, and pure from every selfish motive, except the vanity of being esteemed by a person of superior merit, which was certainly very pardonable. However, as you are a human creature, and, as such, liable to change, I shall admit the bare possibility of your having received and neglected my letter ; and shall, therefore, suspend giving any

* Miss Ourry was at this time in Ireland.

account of my concerns till I have it under your hand, that you are desirous to hear of them.

I will not regale you with an account of the fine children, which it has pleased God to bestow on me; of the still finer ones whom he has thought fit to resume to Himself: or of the tranquillity and comparative happiness I have enjoyed since I saw you; no, nor of the health and prosperity of my parents, or the great and wonderful vicissitudes that have happened in the circle of our acquaintance. I must not only be desired, but intreated, before I make any of these communications. I will tell you, however, that nothing shall ever abate that tender regard, which I shall carry to my grave for you. Mr. G. who is your great admirer, longs also to hear of you. Don't mind postage; mind only what you owe on the score of friendship to your unaltered.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, March, 27, 1791.

MY DEAREST NANCY,

THE sight of your well-known dear-loved hand filled my heart with a pleasure to which I knew nothing comparable, unless what the woman of Zarepta might have felt, on receiving her lamented son alive from the hands of the prophet. . Alas ! I have a sad reason for too deeply feeling the force of that allusion ; but I will not cloud our first meeting with a detail of sorrows ; as little will I take up your time with a tedious recital of the ways and means I have used to hear of you. - - - - - I had not Mr. M.'s* address, but endeavoured to point him out by the circumstances of his being F. R. S. and having held a place at court.

* Malliet, the father of Miss Ourry's friend, Miss Malliet, who then held an office about the Palace, and lived in Westminster.

By

By your having formerly taught me to address you under Lord Kinfale's cover, I was led to discover you in the manner which has proved so gratifying to us both. May my benedictions rest and remain with this good Lord. I wish it were as honourable to him, as the privilege of wearing his hat where he pleases.—Why should I tell you why I was so much concerned and afflicted at the melancholy detail of what you have lost, and what you have suffered? I can but too easily conceive what you must have felt at the final parting with your worthy parents. You all lived so much, and so entirely with each other, and loved each other so *exclusively* as well as tenderly. You can better judge why Young was so great a favourite with me, now that you know, by sad experience,

“ There is no pang like that of bosom torn
From bosom, bleeding o'er the sacred dead.”

The depredations which fraud and villainy have made on your little store, I sincerely regret. Yet, when I consider that your mind was always superior to trappings and tinsel, and that sorrow and sickness must

have long since dissolved the charm that attaches us to the mere exterior forms of life ; when I consider too that you appear to have gathered - - - - from the wreck of your father's property, and that you are now cherished in the tender bosom of friendship and true sympathy ; I would fain hope, your pecuniary resources are equal to your wants, though not to your spirits and past expectations. At worst, you can purchase an annuity I must go lightly over past transactions. My next will be under cover to ——* who is a Cornish member, and, having contrived, like Orpheus, by the power of his lyre, to build a house in this country, is our neighbour and acquaintance. I hope the musical manes of the said Orpheus will forgive my blunder, in imputing to him what was done by Amphion, who, 'on better recollection, built the Theban walls ; and, though I know you dearly love a little hit at me, I hope you will have so much re-

* James Macpherson, the translator of Ossian ; who was our neighbour in the country, and used to frank covers for us.

spect for my classical recollections, as to resist the temptation of comparing me to one of those savages who danced to the said plastic strains : I lie the more open to this, from my singular delight in long descended song. - - - - - I am resolved, like Dogberry, to bestow all my tediousness upon you. Receive, mean time, an abridged, but faithful description of the present state of my family and affairs.

We live on the banks of the Spey ; (would for your sake, it were the Tweed) Mr. G. possesses, one way or other, an income of - - - - - We occupy a comfortable cottage, consisting of four rooms, light closets, and a nursery, and kitchen built out by way of addition. It is situated in a south aspect, at the foot of an arable hill, behind which stretches an extensive moor, once a forest, and still abounding in fuel, which is surmounted by a lofty mountain, the top of which is often lost in the clouds, while its bosom, hollow and verdant, is a reservoir of copious springs, and abounds in early pasturage, and berries peculiar to these regions. Our little do-

main, to which the church-lands are added, stretches about a quarter of a mile through a meadowy, I might well add, flowery valley; through which the river turns and returns again like the Links of Forth, which its waters far excel in purity. At the end of the house is a brook, which often reminds me of Franky's purling brooks, for it purls abundantly through summer, babbles in harvest, and brawls, like a termagant, all winter. In the meadows below, it assumes a new character, and winds, in a deep channel through richly decorated banks, with a murmur so dulcet, so softly plaintive, that one is almost tempted to ask what ails it. I should have told you, that at one end of our cottage is a garden, in which we have planted a variety of trees, and where small fruit abounds. At our door is a stone porch with seats; this rural portico is so covered with honeysuckle, that you would take it for a bower; we have a little green court inclosed before, which, in fine weather, forms a supplement to the nursery. I should have begun by telling you, that we hold a farm at a very easy rent, which
supports

supports a dozen milk cows, and a couple of hundred sheep, with a range of summer pasture on the mountains for our young stock, horses, &c. This farm supplies us with every thing *absolutely* necessary; even the wool and flax, which our handmaids manufacture to clothe the children, are our own growth. But it is time to introduce you within doors, where you will find the master of the dwelling in the midst of the circle he most delights in, and in that home where he appears to most advantage; because his hospitality and warmth of heart here shine through that cloud of reserve and diffidence which conceals him every where else. Singularly domestic, a fond husband, and tenderly indulgent father, he delights in his children from their birth, without nursing them like an old woman; judicious and attentive in what regards out-door management, but totally unconcerned as to what passes within, considering, like a true Highlander, household affairs as entirely the female province; and the duties of his sacred function as the only object, beyond his family, deserving of serious

rious regard. Next, his mate, very little altered in sentiment and principle since you saw her, yet having the wings of romantic elevation somewhat clipped by increasing years and cares; and the fervor of enthusiasm a little abated, with that matronly cast of manners, which the constant exercise of authority, mingled with affection, naturally produces.

You will not think my taste improved when I tell you, 'tis, if possible, more primitive than ever; and that all my pastoral, popular, and American prejudices, have "grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength." How will all this agree with your "prejudice against prejudices?" But we shall agree in the long run, as we ever did. Our minds, indeed, must have had a strong predisposition to unite, when they surmounted so many differences in, what with common minds is every thing, early habits and education. My children I shall characterize at more leisure. At present I shall only say, the first is said to be like her mother, the second like her father, and the third like—a ewe lamb. Now, to form a
more

more precise idea, you must consider these resemblances, as not only literal, but characteristic of my sons. C— and Petrina are twins, a perfect contrast, one being dark-haired, quick and lively, the other fair, soft, and delicate. - - - - - Here is the family-piece drawn, and the landscape; I have not yet shaded my drawing, but I shall throw in the shades in my next. I had more sons—but, Heaven has resumed its own, and I ought silently to bow to its decrees. Expect in my next the eventful history of our friends at Fort Augustus, most of whom have already set out before us, to explore the wide ocean of eternity. Briefly, adieu!

LETTER XXXVII.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, June 4, 1791.

My dear friend! what a history would it make, were I to relate all the little family occur-

occurrences, which, in rapid succession, have hurried on the time since I wrote my last. I carried down my second daughter, who had a threatening illness, to my father's, for sea air. You can't think how the good old people rejoiced to hear that I had found you again:—their lively feelings on this occasion delighted me. I love to see the evening of life warmed by the gentle flame of kindly affections. Of all the evils that wait on the decline of life, there is none I shrink from so much as that chilling torpor of the soul, which contributes more than all our infirmities to make old age unlovely. When I came in a little open machine we keep for these journies, I returned home through the country where Mr. G.'s relations live, and went through a hasty course of visitation. He came down some miles to meet me, and presented your letter, which I snatched with avidity, and read over with delight. I shall defer the mentioning of its contents, till I go through my promised narrative. For some years after you went away, my letters furnished you with

an unbroken series, of which take this succinct and pithy sequel.

* * * * *

I had been all this while projecting a visit to Glasgow, but had deferred it from time to time, out of sympathy for Mrs. Newmarch, who hoped for her lord's return, and would feel most forlorn without me; but the marriage in the family, and the crowd of company which succeeded, leaving her no room to complain of solitude, I went southwards, where my visit, only meant for a month, was drawn out to near a year, which was most agreeably spent. I look back upon it, indeed, as one of the most pleasing periods of my life; not being pass'd in a perpetual flutter of idle visits, but in confirming and strengthening the friendships of my earlier years, and making new and valuable additions to them, which have been ever since a source of great comforts and pleasure to me. Leaving the excellent family, with whom I spent this year of felicity, I returned home through Perth, where had the high gratification of meeting

ing

ing some of my distant relations, who were people of distinguished merit, and whose taste and manners were so suited to my own, that my heart adopted them to a nearer connexion than those distant ties can form. Those lovely sisters*, who lived in this world with all their views directed to another, and meekly sheltered in the shade of retirement, qualities entitled to universal esteem and admiration, lived only long enough to prove that they could fulfil every duty, and grace every department of life. In the bloom of youth, tenderly beloved by the worthiest of husbands, blest with every thing their regulated and modest wishes could aspire to, they obeyed the irresistible summons. The youngest, who was the most beautiful, departed in her twenty-second year, in the high triumphs of faith, taking not only a serene but joyful leave of friends, whom she loved with unusual tenderness. Her sister, in whose arms she died, was immediately seized with the same dis-

* Mrs. Young, of Perth ; and Mrs. Bannar, married to the Minister of Cramond.

order, and met death with the same well-grounded heroism.

“ Surely to blissful realms those souls are flown,
That never flatter’d, censur’d, envied, strove.”

My dear, you will excuse this digressive tribute to departed excellence. What havoc has been lately made in the little circle of those I loved!—

“ Yes, even here, amidst these secret shades,
The simple scenes of unproved delight,
Affliction’s iron hand my breast invades,
And death’s dread dart is ever in my sight.”

Indeed my meditations hover so constantly about the confines of the world unknown, where my aching eyes are continually exploring the departing footsteps of those who still live in my remembrance, that I now see this world and all its vanities, as the apostle says we do futurity, “ through a glass darkly.” These frequent excursions of the mind into the trackless ocean of vast eternity, contribute not a little to throw a dim shade over every thing that dazzles and attracts, in this valley of vision.—Unwillingly must I return to my Fort Augustus narrative, though no motive less potent than a desire to gratify you,

you, would induce me to retrace such a series of crime, folly, and misfortune. Hear then, and be, if not amused, at least instructed. - - - - -

We three all fled at once our several ways, and left the demons of discord and deceit to rule their votaries; none of us would have liked to have outstaid the other. My year's residence in Clydesdale had revived and cherished the love of peace, virtue, and decorum in my heart. The disorders of that most beautiful, but most unhappy place, Fort Augustus, had shewn me vice and folly in their ugliest aspect. Judge, then, whether, in the midst of tranquillity, mutual affection, domestic harmony, and the esteem and goodwill of a decent neighbourhood, I did not enjoy my situation, without repining after languid idleness, insipid chit-chat, artificial wants, poor attempts at finery, and all the mortifications which result from the feeble efforts of inferior people to grasp that fleeting phantom *ton*. I am a wretched narrator, and miserable chronologer; I write fluently from my heart, but very lamely from my memory. Two marriages, however, not of
the

the number said to be made in heaven, I will detail; and let Desdemona heedfully attend, for 'tis no small plague to me to rake up my recollections.

* * * * *

My father removed to Fort George some years ago, where he lives very happily, and derives much pleasure from his grand-children. Different friends from Glasgow and Edinburgh have visited us in this retreat.— By the death of my third son, a charming infant, who lived not many days, I was convinced of what I could not have easily believed, that the death of such an infant could produce severe feelings of sorrow for the time; a thing both sinful and unaccountable. I had, however, another son remaining, in whom all my delight was centered, and who was, indeed, every way an extraordinary child, spoke, walked, and shewed tokens of sensibility and understanding long before the usual period. Strong, robust, and manly, we looked on him as the future pillar of our family, and never dreaded that stroke which we bore so ill when it came. In the fatal May of 1789 our children were seized

with the measles, and had it favourably, all but the darling and pride of our hearts; who being seized at the same time with a worm-fever, which we were not aware of, and knew not how to manage, made his escape from the troubles of life, and left us overwhelmed with the most sinful and extravagant sorrow. But you are no novice in distress, and I will not awaken your griefs, by opening afresh the wounds of mine. My constitution, enfeebled by the rapid increase of my family, was greatly impaired by this shock, but I have had better health since the birth of my twins, who, I hope will continue to be the youngest. My spirits are pretty equal, though that sad event has added to my habits of musing.

The soil here is very rich, though the climate is cold and gloomy. I am very fond of the lower class of people; they have sentiment, serious habits, and a kind of natural courtesy; in short, they are not mob, an animal which Smollet most emphatically says he detests in its head, midriff, and members; and, in this point, I do not greatly differ with him. You would wonder how many of the genteeler

genteeler class live here. They are not rich to be sure ; so much the better for us ;

“ Where no contiguous palace rears its head,
To shame the meanness of the humble shed,”

people do very well, and keep each other in countenance. They have been mostly in the army, are socially and kindly disposed, and have more both of spirit and good-breeding than is usually met with in people of their pitch ; and, as for an inclination to gaiety and hospitality, you may judge of them by what you have seen among your quondam neighbours. If they have foibles, why should I expatiate on them ? They have treated us with uniform kindness and civility, and shewn us as much friendship as, in their idea, becomes them, to such as are not kindred, the sole measure of affection here. I shall quit the ungrateful topic of censure with observing, that, after all, they have more dignity in their pride, and less absurdity in their vanity, than your Hibernian friends, for whom too I still retain a sneaking kindness, after all : but indeed I saw an excellent sample of them.

I have made a great acquisition of late ;
a fine

a fine young creature, a relation of Mr. G.'s, who is under his protection, and passes the winter with her friends in town, and the rest of the year here*. At more leisure I will tell you her story, but am now as sick of narrative as I have made you. Mr. G. has been at Edinburgh, attending the General Assembly, which answers to your poor dead, or rather dumb Convocation. I meet him next week at Lord Breadalbane's seat, where he is to come with some of my Glasgow friends.

When I hear from you again I shall acquaint you with the result, and give my ideas coolly and distinctly on the subject of your letter, and your present mode of living. I can now only congratulate you on enjoying the society of your Louisa, to whose superior mind yours must be a higher gratification than any that wealth can procure. What indeed can wealth procure that the vulgarest wretch may not equally taste and enjoy, except that first of intellectual joys, which wealth so rarely attains, the society of an elegant mind, purified by virtue, and en-

* Miss Charlotte Grant, since Mrs. Smith.

deared by friendship. I long to hear of your crossing the mountains on a goat, and how Wales agrees with you. I shall mark the geographical bearing of my dwelling minutely in my next. We live about fifty miles from both Inverness and Perth, which are the nearest towns; yet, in spite of distance and obscurity, my sworn foe, the *ton*, pursues, overtakes, and furrounds me. Don't wait for a frank; one who despises all other luxuries as I do, my well claim this single indulgence. Adieu! beloved.

I am yours unalterably.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, Sept. 3, 1791.

NEVER did a cordial come more opportunely to a poor creature fainting with weakness, than my dearest A.'s kind letter, to soothe my agonizing heart, and divert, for a little, my attention from one sad object,

which fixes and engrosses it, in spite of my prayers and endeavours. Petrina, my lovely Petrina, the sweet image of my dear lamented Peter, is no more. This is a wound very near the heart, and yet I must own the justice of it. I had a darling before, on whose animated and sensible countenance I gazed with unbounded rapture, and whom I always regarded with unwarrantable partiality. Yet I might well have judged, from his dissimilarity to ourselves, and the rest of the family, that he would not remain with us. After having dazzled and charmed us for four years and a few months, he returned to Him from whom he came, leaving us overwhelmed with excessive and sinful anguish. About a year after his death, those twins were born. The eldest I instantly recognized to be the exact resemblance of my sweet boy, whose memory is twined with the fibres of my heart. As she grew older, her vivacity, her open, generous temper, her robust appearance and quick growth, every thing renewed him to us, as well as the expressive and animated countenance that seized the eye of every stranger, and the heart of every one

one of the family. Indeed she was too lovely, and, till a week before her death, was the very picture of health and vigour. What a profusion of love was heaped upon her, during the period of her short life. Her brothers and sisters, her father, all doated upon her. But her heavenly Father has now vindicated his right, and punished our presumptuous partiality. When I am abler, I shall tax your patience with a recital of the aggravating circumstances of her death. I can now only tell you, that on Sunday, the 12th, she made her way, through the keenest agonies, to everlasting felicity.

“Ye that e’er lost an angel, pity me.”

Never child gave so little trouble and so much pleasure to parents. I well know how rich I am in remaining blessings, and how both reason and religion forbid repining, because he who has bestowed so many good gifts, sees fit in his own manner to resume them. When the prayers I daily offer have the desired effect, I may bow patiently to the divine decree; but now, my dearest friend, a cup can only hold its fill, and mine

is filled to the very brim. Were all my earthly comforts removed, I could only grieve, as I do now, as much as my nature can sustain, though I might mourn longer and more excusably. Farewel. Be charitable, for you do not know how you could bear this.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, Sept. 8, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND!

MY last sombre epistle has, by this time, reached you, and awakened all your sympathy. It affords a ray of comfort to me at this distance, to think you feel with, and for me. Those who are immersed, as most people around you are, in eager pursuits of pleasure and ambition, can have no idea of distress like mine. They have not the simplicity of taste which enjoys and feels the attractive charm of infant innocence. Can
those

those who grasp at a thousand shadows which render the mind both callous and fastidious, by their emptiness and variety, contemplate with steadfast gaze and ever new delight, the dawning of sensibility, the unfolding blooms of intelligence and affection? It is in the shady vales, the obscure retreats of life, far from the noise of turbulent passions, and the parade of splendid vanities, that the soft and kindly affections root deep, and flourish fair. There all the pleasures they afford, are tasted in perfection; but it is there, when these tender ties are broken, that anguish is most pungent. The twin sister of my Petrina has been very unwell. I regarded her danger with composure that excited my own wonder. Perhaps like Burns,

“ With firm, resolved, despairing eye
I view each aimed dart,
Since one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.”

O may I be forgiven for these effusions of despondency, and enabled to fix my thoughts on that awful day when I fondly hope to recognize my children among the

K 3

blessed

bleſſed heirs of immortality. O ! if this hope be ſinful, I am indeed a great ſinner ; it feeds my imagination, and cheriſhes my heart, and, at intervals, ſoothes my woe-worn ſpirits into a ſublime tranquillity. Sure we ſhall not forget our fellow-travellers in this vale of mortality, in the bright regions of bleſt futurity. We cannot retain a partial recollection of paſt events, that is, we cannot ſeparate the retroſpection of them, from the remembrance of thoſe who have enjoyed and ſuffered with us in this tranſient ſtate of probation. How can we remember the numberleſs mercies received, the many dangers eſcaped, and temptations reſiſted, which will furniſh themes for praiſe, at leaſt during our noviciate in bliſs—How, I ſay, can we remember theſe, without, at the ſame time, calling back thoſe who were our aſſociates in ſuffering, thoſe who lived in our boſoms, and were to us the objects of an innocent and pure affection, ſuch as helps to preſerve us from the contagion of the world, and keeps the heart warm, and open to the beſt impreſſions ?

Mean, obſcure, and dull as every thing muſt appear

appear to you here, I have so made up my mind, and so fore-warned and fore-armed you, that I look forward to next May, as the time that is to relieve my mind of its burden. I am in no pain about finding out a tolerable companion for you. I shall set enquirers on foot very early, and will engage that you shall not find yourself a stranger here. At any rate, you shall not sojourn without benefit of clergy. As for your *Cloten*, I can only say, 'tis strange—

“ A woman that bears all down with her brain,
Should yield the world this afs.”

* * * * *

You well remember a time when the *amor patriæ* burnt with uncommon and imprudent ardour in the breast of your friend. Now, though I used to fight “tooth and nail” for Scotland, I had not then reflection enough to discriminate in my defensive operations; that there were two or three causes equally dear to me, blended with my defence of Mother Meg—virtuous and dignified po-

verty, elegance of sentiment that lives in the heart and conduct, and subsists independent of local and transitory modes, a degree of amiable simplicity among the middle ranks of life, and of modest decorum, resulting from pious impressions in the lower, not often to be met with in that class. For the ease of our social intercourse, and our general good-will towards strangers, we are certainly indebted to our former connexion with France. Our national pride and poverty, so well known, and so generally stigmatized, is, notwithstanding, of great advantage to us. From the one we derive a certain dignity, which when joined with our ordinary sense of integrity, preserves us from mean and unworthy actions. Our poverty, again, produces frugality and temperance, for which I hear you observe, we are not much to be thanked. Observe the inference.

* * * * *

Clanship, doubtless, narrows the affections, and produces many absurd and unpleasing associations; yet it is better to love forty or
12
fifty

fifty people warmly and exclusively on absurd grounds, than to love nobody at all; and then pretend to love all the world (which does not care a straw for you), as the Parisian philosophers do, on whom the demons of scepticism and discord will soon visit all the mischiefs they are doing, and the far greater mischiefs they occasion. My poor dear Odyssey tells a fine story of Æolus having the winds in a bag, and what havoc followed when they were unskilfully let out. Now I think popular writers possess bags, in which those winds are contained that blow the embers of discontent into flames of destruction. What a dreadful account is to be made for the use of power so unlimited! No despotism is like that practised by the rulers of opinion; but I believe it is become customary to have no settled opinion, but to keep the mind open for the reception of experimental whimsies. I feel the water deeper every moment, and will return to avoid drowning. Shallow streams are safest; therefore I bid you heartily farewell.

LETTER XL.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, Oct. 4, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAD a hurried letter from you more than a month ago. Lest I forget again to tell you, I have heard twice from Miss O. since she went into Gloucestershire, where she is very happy with her aunt, to whom she must be a great comfort. The health and freedom she enjoys in that peaceful retreat seem to have given a new turn to her spirits. She is evidently more cheerful, and makes reflections on her situation similar to your own. Her invaluable friend has, I hope by this time, received her at London. I always forgot to tell you Mr. Grant's answer to your query, "whether he had changed his mind about never more going from home." He bids me say he has been kissing his door-posts ever since his return, and always finds his devotion to his household gods much increased by any suspension of the usual

usual worship. Yet I doubt not, the inducement of being able to carry these *teraphim* with him, might induce him to travel a good way in a given direction. What a stroller I have been this summer! When children came one at a time, I staid at home, and attended to them with great care; now they come in pairs, I scamper away like a *ben* ostrich, or a fine lady. I began my career by going to my father's in spring. That was on business, and I only staid two days. You know where we met in June. When I returned, I was obliged, in consequence of an old engagement, to visit some friends in the lower part of the country, at a most beautiful place about ten miles distance. I left C. in the house of the pastor there, whom you have heard me mention as a person of fine taste, superior abilities, and extensive information. I should have told you, how I happened, at this time, to go to Fort Augustus. I have a cousin, who succeeded my father in his office there, and possesses a large farm in the neighbourhood. He had a most promising family growing up, and was very prosperous in the world, having

fallen into the succession of a small estate since he came there. But, lately, they met with the deepest affliction, in consequence of having lost, at one time, their favourite son and daughter, the one about eighteen, the other nineteen, years old. Their father, always infirm and delicate, fell into a dangerous illness soon after, from which he is now slowly recovering. Mr. Grant had to go over to attend a church court, to be held there last week, and I accompanied him. We took an odd fancy, for grave people ten years wedded; and, what was most to be wondered at, the proposal was not mine, to whom you would most readily impute it. It was, to leave the vehicle and Angus at the foot of Corryarick, to go the circuitous road, which you may remember, while we took the shepherd's foot-path from the bridge, which, leading down a steep, where no carriage can venture, led into the long-known, dear-loved recesses on the borders of the Tarfe, where the hazel-woods, the echoing *Drimen Duie*, and the charming waterfall that I have so often described to you, lay in our path. Now you are not to
suppose

suppose that we were so much of a Corydon and Pastora, as to come here for the mere purpose of enjoying sylvan beauties, and reviving tender recollections. It was humane, for it saved the poor horse ; it was prudent, for it saved near two miles ; it was civil, for it managed our time and road so as to put it in our power to visit our friends at Culachy, to whose abode this pathway was a short cut. But you have no idea of the wild beauties of this walk ; their shades, sacred so often to contemplation and to friendship, have improved in solemnity and variety in the ten years interregnum. When the triad used to find such pleasure in haunting these deep retreats, the trees were not near so lofty, the incursions of hunters were more frequent, the country was more populous ; but now the coppice is become a grove, whose tenants have increased, conscious of their safety. Oh ! that you could see these hazel bowers, and the light festoons of wild honeysuckle pendent from their topmost branches ! That you could hear the sweet responses of native music, the deep murmur of the dark and secret stream, and the

the mysterious echo of *Drimen Duie*! * These are, indeed, like sounds

“ Sent by spirits to mortals good,
Or th’ unseen genius of the wood.”

Do you think we could pass by the beautiful rocky basin I have so often told you of, where a little tributary stream falls in broken rills down a steep rock, decked with fantastic tufts of flowers and nodding plants? We did not pass it by, but stood a while on the brink, recollecting the associate of our

* *Drimen Duie*, often mentioned in these letters, is a very singularly shaped eminence, near three miles above Fort Augustus, in the deep woody recesses of Glentarfe. It projects forward into an angle formed by opposing precipices, on the opposite side of the Tarfe, from which it is divided by the river, which makes a quick turn round the base of this beautiful height, the summit of which is flat and covered with verdure and flowers; while the steep sides are adorned with the most beautiful shrubs; and the opposite caverns reverberate every sound in such a manner, that music in this spot has a singular and fine effect.—The rocky basin (mentioned also in this page) receives a small fall of water which descends from the lofty rock that bounds Glentarfe, half a mile below *Drimen Duie*.

wild wanderings, and the unequalled melody of the richest and mellowest wood-notes that ever met my ear. For here we used to rest and listen to "songs divine to hear;" either such plaintive notes as the "voice of Cona sung," given in his native language, or our own sweetest pastoral lays, sung with simplicity, taste, and expression, that will never meet again in these days of artifice.

"O, lost Ophelia, sweetly flow'd the day,
To feel thy music with my soul agree;
To taste the beauties of thy heartfelt lay,
To taste, and fancy it was dear to thee!"

I could not help saying this to my companion, here, where her image seemed to hover. We paid the due tribute of tenderness to the memory of our hard-fated friend; tenderness unmingled with regret; for we were pleased to think she was escaped from a world, where she, in particular, had so much to suffer, and so little to enjoy. Full of her resemblance, we followed the course of the stream which led to the house of her favourite brother. He was not at home; but his pretty little wife welcomed us with a grace and cordiality that made us regret having
only

only a single hour to spend with her. When we emerged from "the valley of vision," and saw Loch Ness from the eminence on which the house stands, I felt as if time had run back ; but that was a mere momentary sensation. I will not tell you how glad my relations were to see me, or how the villagers flocked about me, to tell all their intervening history ; but, finding it vain to hope for solitude and quiet, to perform one of my customary *acts of recollection*, I rose one morning at five, and went round the boundaries of our old domain and the Fort, then crossed the bridge of Oich, and, from the rocks of Inchnacardach, took a wide survey of the lake, then a perfect mirror, and the noble steep of Sigchurman, decked with fantastic wreaths of rolling mist, that changed their form every moment as the sun broke out upon them. I retired towards Inchnacardach, where I mused, undisturbed, till fancy had her fill. I felt like a person transplanted to the poetical shades, who wanders among myrtle groves and elysian vales in pensive contemplation, and sees the shadowy forms of those beloved in life, and mourned
in

in death, glide silent by him. The sweet recesses, and sequestered scenes, in the vicinity, are become more beautiful than ever. I took a kind of solemn delight in thus retracing my wonted paths among them; and, you may well believe, fancy peopled them with the shades of the departed. The gentle spirit of poor Mrs. N. was not absent. Her death, or rather her release from life, I could think of with serenity, when I recollected how much she deserved, and how little she obtained, in this state of probation. Her father, whom I have so often looked on with indifference, I regarded with unmixed compassion. Any thing so forlorn and helpless I have not seen. He seemed pleased to see me for her sake, and tried in trembling accents, to speak of her. My cousin seemed gratified by our visit, and I was glad we made it. I saw several people to whom I wish well, whom I shall probably never see again. Then my mind was so easy with regard to the family, and the little Gemini, as Charlotte had the entire charge of them, who is the
very

very best deputy matron I ever knew. You see I have made the most of this summer, being the first, since I was married, that I was not *very particularly* engaged at home.

It will refresh you, after all this tragi-pastoral, to hear that Gwynn is married quite to his mind, and is the happiest of human beings. Though no one had more the habits and notions of a confirmed bachelor, yet, formed only for domestic life, he languished in tasteless apathy, wanting he knew not what, for he was carefully taught to despise matrimony. He has got a very good little woman, with an easy temper, and just as much intellect as he would wish for, who loves him, and has brought him a fine child, in which he takes great pleasure. All this fills the void in his heart, and the vacancy in his time, that made him formerly most deplorably listless, though the best hearted creature imaginable. A brother of his wife who died abroad, has left her a pretty little fortune; so he has, every way, drawn a prize in the lottery of marriage.

Good connections are not wanting, for the lady is one of Mr. Grant's hundred kinswomen, and, consequently, M. Gwynn is now allied to us. What a privilege! Now that I have given you no brief abstract of my summer campaign since I saw you at our assignation in Canmore, you must needs do justice to my diligence in recording important transactions. Though you should not hear from me for half a year to come, these *commentaries* will bear witness of my unshaken fidelity. Now let me hear you venture, after this, to say you have *nothing material*. In return for these reveries of solitude, you owe me something from the busy haunts of men. Retirement at the Fairley is a mere pretence. You go to be merry, and at ease, among your intimates, and then call it retiring.—We found all well at home, and the little *gemini* the finest amusing little creatures. How lucky for you that I am near the end of my paper, or they might

“Live in description, and look *squat* in song;”
for *squat* they both are, this moment, on the floor. But I cannot “paint, ere they change, the Cynthia of the minute,” though
you

you should take an interest in them as the favourite playthings of your affectionate friend !

LETTER XLI.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, Oct. 7, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

By a letter from Charlotte, while at Edinburgh, I find there is one from you on the way ; so that I can write again without descending from my dignity ; and I can do this with the more ease of mind, as my little twins are now recovered from the small-pox. They are the best children I ever had, and very healthy and pleasant-looking. My eldest girl is now staying here, and your name-daughter with Duncan at the Fort.

* * * * *

These are the outlines, as far as I can draw them, of this triad. You will smile, and call it a panegyric. Though very unlike each

each other in many respects, one characteristic feature of similitude runs through them all. They are all artless and disinterested : no traces of mean cunning or selfish grasping. This is an indication of an enlarged mind ; and, besides the future promise, has a present good effect. Whatever they have they share with each other with readiness and pleasure ; so there is one source of wrangling and debate stopped. They all give pretty strong proofs of feeling as well as understanding ; and it is by the management of these feelings that I propose, in a great measure, to sway them, till their minds open and strengthen, so that one may reason with them without teaching them *parrotism*. This, perhaps, might not be a safe way in the world ; but, if ever children can be brought up with uncorrupted hearts, they have a chance of being so. Their number, and being altogether strangers to those indulgences which wealth and ease admit of, will entirely prevent their being softened into a sickly sensibility, by those feelings being exercised. For the art lies in directing them to those ends for which it

is presumed they were bestowed. In the first place, I am at the utmost pains to fix their affections; we should be unhappy if we thought they loved any one near so well as their parents. Indulgence will not produce this effect solely, for to that there must at last be limits; and a child, who is very seldom refused any thing, considers refusal as injury. When this happens oftener, the fear of being mortified makes him reflect before he makes any request, whether it be a proper one. One or two indulged children might be endured; but a large family of them would be Tophet and Gehenna. The thing is, to endeavour early so to manage their feelings and affections, that they shall shrink from the idea of giving pain to those they love. Having made sure of their affection, the next point is to secure their esteem, that it may stamp authority on my decisions, and preserve that respect so necessary for maintaining my influence. Shall I confess to you, that the most finished coquette was never at greater pains to appear to advantage before her lovers, than I am to conceal every defect
and

and weakness from my children. Thus I endeavour, by exciting their veneration, to preserve my ascendancy over their flexible and unformed minds. My great object is to form their hearts to an ardent love of virtue, to a generous admiration of superior excellence, and to compassion, not only for the weaknesses but even the vices of their fellow creatures. I would have them cherish those pure and delicate sentiments, which make the vices of others not appear to them as objects of acrimonious censure and self-applauding comparison; that they shall as habitually turn from the view of human nature thus degraded and deformed, as we do from any object that is peculiarly disgusting to our senses. In that case, they will turn their eyes with pleasure on every view of the human character which still retains any traces of that divine image in which we were created;

“Tho’ sullied and dishonor’d, still divine.”

It is not by formal maxims, or frigid precepts, that we teach them the great doctrines of morality; yet we are continually in a powerful, though indirect manner impressing

impressing them on their minds. I never forbid them formally to steal or covet, to envy or traduce, because, "they have the commandments," and are taught to reverence them as the dictates of inspiration; and because I never observed in them the least symptom of a sordid or malignant inclination. But in my general discourse, in the conversation I have with their father, or others, in their presence, I always set the contrary virtues in the strongest, fairest light; avoid as much as possible, talking of other people's follies or crimes; and, should they be casually mentioned, pass them lightly over with an air of indifference or disgust, not calculated to excite their attention or curiosity. 'Tis a sad thing that children should be taught, by the example of their seniors, to pursue vice into all its dirty recesses; and to triumph in their superiority and discernment in making discoveries, which when they are made, afford neither profit nor pleasure. I prefer the more pleasing task of insinuating instruction, and awaking the generous thrill of emulative desire, by pointing out to their enamoured view all

that is great, lovely, or excellent, in the characters of the living or the dead ; nay, even of those that never lived or died, except in the creative imagination of poets and philosophers. Not but that I greatly prefer examples drawn from reality. What is necessary to be known of evil, by way of guard or prevention, may be very soon acquired ; for the whole world are in a combination to impress that kind of instruction. When I have warmed their hearts, and enriched their minds, with abstracts of all that wisdom and devotion, truth, honour, magnanimity, and tenderness have done to adorn and exalt our nature, I descend a step lower in the scale of existence, and make them observe and admire the fidelity, affection, maternal tenderness, attachment, and gentleness, which are seen in little birds and domestic animals. All this helps to impress still stronger on their minds the sense I would have them entertain of these qualities whenever they meet with them. After thus endeavouring to give a right direction to that generosity and tenderness with which it has pleased God to endow them, I would

(though I know them myself) be at no great pains to teach them those refinements in manners which it is become fashionable to talk so much about. The kind and degree of good breeding I should most approve and wish for, will naturally result from a well principled mind, a feeling heart, and a just and cultivated taste. Especially when the manners of those they look up to for examples are not devoid of that softness which delicacy of sentiment always produces. Forms and punctilio are the mere superstition of good breeding, easily acquired and of little value. The ease of fashionable manners, the determined self-confident ease, nothing but mixing much with fashionable people can give: at least I should suspect a little *native bronze*, where it grew wild. A person, who, to a good, and in some measure cultivated, understanding, adds modesty, gentleness, and some refinement of taste, may not be elegant, but can scarcely be vulgar. And such manners may, by a slight culture, be improved into elegant simplicity, of all elegant things the most desirable. Though elegance should

should prove unattainable, I would still have that simplicity, both in their taste and manners which would be most suitable to the humble station in which Providence has placed them; and, at the same time, have their minds impressed with that true dignity, which is compatible with any station which one may suppose the daughter of a gentleman, in the ordinary course of life, either to raise or sink into. You know what my religious opinions are, and what unspeakable importance I attach to them; so you may believe we are at all times anxious to leave this invaluable legacy unimpaired to those who have so little beside to inherit from us. On these subjects you and I have but one opinion; and I am so unfashionable as to think, one never can begin too soon to direct a child's hopes and fears to their proper and ultimate object; though reason must not be addressed till it unfolds, for fear of teaching children to use words without annexing ideas to them, which is just the parrotism that I dislike. You will wonder to see me dwell so much on cultivating the taste, when I am such an ad-

mirror of undisguised nature ; but I respect taste as an outguard of virtue ; a just and regulated taste would make the levity, the absurdity, the cunning and meanness, which often accompany depraved inclinations, more obvious and disgusting. Besides, it places every charm of all-beauteous nature, every grace and ornament of ingenious art, in the fairest point of view ; which has the happiest effect upon the heart and temper. Time and paper so confine me, that I must reserve all that crowds on me to answer the objections you will naturally make to this mode of education. My children, you will say, after being brought up to my wish, will be, after all, but amiable ignoramuses, unacquainted with human life, and unable, from their extreme simplicity, to ward off the blows of malice, or avoid the snares of deceit. Some acquaintance with human depravity, you will say, is necessary for enabling us to act with due caution in a corrupt world. I answer, that they will find too many instructors in this crooked science, and know but too soon what every one is too willing and able to teach. Delicacy and
a high

a high principle is a better guard than cunning and suspicion. A person possessed of the former qualities, feels not at home or easy with artificial characters, and shrinks unconsciously from the approach of the callous and designing. A large family is a little community within itself. The variety of dispositions, the necessity of making occasional sacrifices of humour and inclination, and, at other times, resisting aggression or incroachment, when properly directed by an over-ruling mind, teach both firmness and flexibility, as the occasion may call forth the exercise of those qualities. Respect and submission to the elder branches of a family, tenderness and forbearance to the younger, all tend more to moral improvement, if properly managed, than volumes of maxims and rules of conduct. With regard to modesty and deference too, people in our situation must needs enforce those in self defence. In a cottage, where children are continually under the eye of their parents, and confined within narrow bounds, petulance would be purgatory. This detail of mine wants nothing but a little method

and arrangement to be the ape of a lecture. Regard, however, with indulgence, the hasty sketch, which conveys to you some idea of the manner in which we endeavour to discharge the most important of all social obligations, though a most confused and imperfect abstract of our own very imperfect scheme. You will be partial to it, merely because it is ours. If you are disappointed, my best apology must be reminding you how often you have solicited this brief chronicle. Now reward my tedious blear-eyed vigil, by giving me as minute an account of your family as I have given you of mine. Mr. Grant begs to be warmly remembered to Mr. Smith, who, I trust, has not forgotten that I can't endure to be forgotten. I am charmed with the accounts I hear of Mrs. B.'s little family. Make my love acceptable to her, and believe me, in spite of matrimony, distance, and Drimochter, most truly, most tenderly, yours.

LETTER XLII.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, Oct. 14, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You may believe I received with very great pleasure an assurance of what before I greatly doubted, that you will once more breathe the pure mountaingales, impregnated with wholesome heath, and diffusive of the spirit of wholesome poverty; the train of rigid, finewy, and hard-featured virtues superadded. You see, notwithstanding your good-humoured irony, the hypothesis of situation continues to be a favourite one with me, and I despair not of making you, on rational grounds, a profelyte to my opinion. When France was the land of wit and refinement, if not of wisdom, it was a maxim of one of its best authors, that we are all in some degree, *les animaux d'habitude*, that, in short, forms of life tincture our virtues with their peculiar dye, and not only often

produce, but in some measure excuse and palliate our vices. This is no flattering hypothesis for me. It always humbles me in my own eyes, by reminding me, that from the examples I have seen, from the pure precepts, and safe obscurity under the influence of which I was educated, far from all that corrupts the heart and dazzles the imagination ; I say when I reflect on all these collateral aids to the propensities of a warm heart, in which the seeds of truth were early sown, I must in common honesty disclaim your compliments. So circumstanced, I must have been a monster of depravity, had I acted through life with less practical reverence for virtue than I have done. Though I have all the abhorrence of vice natural to a person of strong feeling, living much out of its reach ; yet, when I see, as it often happens, strong flashes of generosity, probity, and humanity, breaking through the gloom of mental sloth and ignorance, and casting a transient lustre over characters, debased by habitual vices, which too early intercourse with a bad world have produced, my heart melts to think how amiable those
might

might have been, had they gone out into the world, fortified with good principles, and acquainted with sublimer pleasures than the world has to bestow. - - - - -

Now here are two marked instances of virtues so modified, that have had no small influence on your own mind.

I see you have greatly mistaken my political creed, which is borrowed from a much sounder judgment than my own, and much nearer your own than you are aware of. The only real grievance Scotland labours under, originates with landholders ; perhaps, more remotely, in commerce ; since the tide of wealth which commerce has poured into the northern part of the island, has led our trading people to contend with our gentry, in all the exterior elegancies of life. The latter seem stung with a jealous solicitude to preserve their wonted ascendancy over their new rivals. This pre-eminence can only be kept up by heightening at all hazards their lands. Thus the ancient adherents of their families are displaced. These, having been accustomed to a life of devotion, simplicity, and frugality, and being bred to

endure hunger, fatigue, and hardship, while following their cattle over the mountains, or navigating the stormy seas that surround their islands, form the best resource of the state, when difficulties, such as the inhabitants of a happier region are strangers to, must be encountered for its service. When we consider this world as merely a passing scene, at the conclusion of which the question will not be, who has supported the most consequential character, but who has acted best the part allotted, we must look upon that as the best destination, which affords the widest scope for the exercise and effects of various virtues. In civilized society, wealth does, and must give influence; but it would be a wretched state indeed, in which wealth should be the only distinction. A man whose ancestors have rendered themselves for a course of time eminent in the state, as generally some among them, to whom he looks back for example, and whose virtues and abilities reflect lustre on his descendants. Though the depravity of our nature appears but too conspicuously among the higher classes of mankind, yet
among

among these too, talents and merit appear with greater splendour, and are of more ornament and service to mankind, than the same qualities in their inferiors. Condescension and affability, for instance, would vanish, if we were all equal. The charity and hospitality of a nobleman will be more admired and imitated than the same qualities in a wealthy tradesman :

“ A faint in crape, is twice a faint in lawn.”

In short, every thing that decorates, or enlightens, is best seen from an eminence. Nothing but pure patriotism, great poverty, and perfect equality, an assemblage we shall never see combined, could make a republic on a large scale at all supportable. Believe me, I have no prejudice against monarchy, mildly exercised, or duly limited ; I consider it as an institution, naturally growing out of that patriarchal sovereignty, which, in the primitive ages, the parent, doubly revered for his many years and great experience, was wont to exercise over his numerous and obedient offspring. In a state, where no unalloyed good is indulged to us, we often shew our best wisdom, when

of many evils we chuse the least. For my own part, though I were so French and so new-fangled as to consider all legal governments as monsters let loose to eat up liberty, I should still prefer the three-headed Cerberus, whose salutary terrors prevent the condemned from entering the regions of bliss, like our threefold government, whose terrors only affect the wicked; even this, I say, I should prefer to the many-headed hydra, who, breathing death and contagion indiscriminately, may represent the barbarous genius of mob government. Now that I am got into classical allusions, permit me to *Burkify* a little longer, and to assure you that I should be very much grieved to see that good old lady, or gentleman, (I know not which to call it,) the Constitution, cut up and dismembered, because it has a few wrinkles or grey hairs, or to see Medea's old kettle put on again, while Mr.—— and Lord L. stood chief cooks, and Tom Paine scullion. I think I see Mary W—— and so many more public-spirited ladies bringing aprons-full of herbs, like witches, to the magic cauldron. The ways
of

of the Almighty baffle our penetration. This temporary triumph of irreligion and false philosophy will tear the mask off the monster, who, wrapt in the specious disguise of moderation, and speaking the language of sentiment and liberality, has for near a century past been undermining the foundations of religion and morality. What pains have been taken to promulgate that profound discovery, “that bigotry and religious zeal have done more hurt in society, than scepticism and all the mere speculative evils of philosophy.” The reason is plain. Great bodies of people were confederated together, under the influence of bigotry and superstition. The crafty and ambitious few made the passions of the well-meaning, though ignorant, many, subservient to their cruelty and avarice, and thus produced those tragedies which deform the face of history. But hitherto these enlightened philosophers have been dispersed here and there, without numbers or cohesion to enable them to begin their practical operations. We have never, till now, seen a nation of refined enlightened infidels governed by the dictates of philosophy ;

sophy ; and it is to be hoped that the world will be terrified and warned by the dreadful spectacle. I here dedicate to you the first-fruits of my pen upon the arduous and intricate subject of politics ; and as I am pretty much of opinion it will also be my last excursion into those unexplored regions, pray regard it with some fellow feeling, it being like yourself, an only child. Mr. Grant has not yet conquered his astonishment at your growing fat. " Bless me, Miss Ourry fat ! 'tis impossible : " his fancy had formed you a mere skeleton. A few grey hairs begin already to adorn my temples. The small portion which fell to my share of " celestial rosy red," has most ambitiously forsaken its native station, and mounted up to my " lack-lustre eyes." Constant solicitude and the cares of the nursery have made me

" Like a meagre mope adust and thin,
In a loose night-gown of my own wan skin."

I will describe no longer. Come, see, and conquer. Receive numberless loves from those I best love, and believe me

Yours, from her heart, and unaltered.

LETTER XLIII.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, Oct. 30, 1791.

You will not let me alone, nor will I give up my point. In spite of your raillery, I insist that the ties of blood bind stronger, and the duties of relationship are better understood in the Highlands, than any where else. I by no means except the Low country of Scotland. This too is not a reflected moral sense of duty, but the mere effect of honest habits and salutary prejudices. 'Tis a singular instance of the Almighty's goodness, that, in these poor barren countries, from which he has withheld so many of the blessings he bestows on others, the few who possess any portion of wealth should be stimulated by those kindly propensities to diffuse it among their remote relations. These last, besides the habitual pride and indolence attending imagined high birth, have
not,

not, from education or situation, the means of procuring a livelihood, as in wealthy and commercial countries. This, no doubt, forms no pleasant chain of dependence, but in this, as in many other instances,

“ What happier nature shrinks at with affright,
The hard inhabitants contend is right.”

Though I applaud this reverence for kindred, I do not benefit by it; but on the contrary, though I regard my neighbours with the utmost esteem and good will, I cannot give away any thing so precious as friendship to any one, who, after all, would prefer the most insignificant of her third cousins to me.—Believe me, my children, though prepared to love and admire you, are neither taught to expect a beauty, wit, or fine lady; but one who has no small merit in disclaiming pretensions to all those envied characters, and associating, by a rare combination, softness of manners with strength of mind, vivacity with reflection, and that common useful sense which hourly discerns the proper and expedient in ordinary life, with that delicacy of perception which apprehends and tastes all that enlightens the

understanding and enlarges the heart, in knowledge or sentiment. If, as you say, no wandering rivulet renovates your powers, you are surely like the Leeward Islands, visited by frequent water-spouts, that is, inspirations, that fertilize your intellects. I certainly have an ample cistern which retains all I acquire: this common observers mistake for a fountain.—Tell Miss M. I love her as well as one can love a rival. Mr. Grant sends you his benediction, and rejoices to think your portly figure will do credit to his housekeeping, though I should still lament my leanness.

Adieu, dearest.

LETTER XLIV.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, Nov. 19, 1791.

You cannot conceive, indeed you cannot, how reviving the cordial warmth of your last letter was to my drooping heart—
a heart

a heart from which all the cares and all the tenderneſſes ariſing out of a family, ſo large, ſo helpleſs, ſo loving and beloved, cannot exclude you. For the years I thought you dead, and when you were dead to me, your image would very often recur with a ſhort quick pang, like that which now accompanies the angelic form of my dear loſt Petrina, when it beams acroſs my fancy; for indeed I do not ſit down to grieve, but endeavour to pay the beſt tribute to her memory, by a ſedulous diſcharge of my various and complicated duties to thoſe who loved her ſo tenderly while ſhe was lent to us. I think of every thing I ſee with a reference to how you will like it. I fooliſhly think that you will be as much pleaſed as I am at all the budding virtues and graces with which my ſanguine fancy decorates my children; little conſidering that, from the external elegance to which you have been accuſtomed, they muſt at beſt appear to you, at firſt, a parcel of awkward cubs, unformed and overgrown. The culture of the heart is our great object. We let the acquiſition of knowledge, manners, &c. go on

on *piano* till we make sure of the main point. Where the natural temper is mild and generous, and theirs appears very much so, deep impressions of integrity and early habits of benevolence must communicate to the manners the unconstrained air of open rectitude, and that animated softness which a disinterested wish to please always produces. Indeed we have few maxims; one of those few is, that it is easier to be than to seem.

* * * * *

She* inquired about you of her brother, who spoke so highly of you, that she was quite delighted with the thoughts of making such an addition to the stock of living merit within the circle of her personal knowledge, and pleases herself with the thoughts of bringing you here herself, and setting you down at our little gate, where she hopes to meet yet another *white crow*, to express it elegantly. There is nothing like concluding a period sublimely; yet I should not conclude without telling you that Mr. Macintosh is a

* Mrs. Macintosh, of Dunchattan, with whose brother, Dr. John Moore, Miss Ourry was well acquainted.

man worth taking a journey to see, not of active benevolence only, but of restless, impetuous benevolence. I will teach you to venerate him at more leisure, having now no time to do him justice. - - - - - I will no more wander into the maze of politics, being sufficiently occupied with the care of our limited (very limited) monarchy at home, in which I participate, by turns, the legislative and executive powers, and though I never aim at despotism, try to keep firm to my *veto*. Our tumults in the north appear aggravated and formidable to you in London, which is the region of political panics. Honest John Bull is very liable to the vapours; and the stocks

“ Turn at the touch of joy or woe,
But, turning, tremble too;”

of which those, who live by feeling their pulse, take the advantage. The only cause of complaint in Scotland is the rage for sheep-farming. The families removed on that account, are often as numerous as our own. The poor people have neither language, money, nor education, to push their way any where else; though they often possess feelings

feelings and principles, that might almost rescue human nature from the reproach which false philosophy and false refinement have brought upon it. Though the poor Rosshire people were driven to desperation, they even then acted under a sense of rectitude, touched no property, and injured no creature. As for the mobs in towns, they are mere ebullitions of ignorance and wantonness in a people who were never so rich before, and to whom wealth and freedom are such novelties, that they know not the true use or bounds of either.—I got your letters regularly from the quarter-deck, and wrote to you by the Fingalian cover. Tell Miss M. I respect her for her own sake, and love her for yours.

Adieu! my dearest N.

LETTER XLV.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Laggan, Jan. 21, 1792.

DEAR MADAM,

THE deep sense I feel of the kindness expressed in your much valued letter, and the consolation which the acquisition of regard, from a character so estimable, affords, even under the pressure of my present affliction, encourages me to write to you, even now, when I am very unfit to communicate my ideas, except where they will be received with the most partial indulgence. I know it is unbecoming, nay, almost unchristianly, in me, to use the emphatic language of sorrow, in speaking of an infant's happy transition from the dangers and snares of this chequered scene to a state of stable felicity. She is departed before she has known sin or sorrow, and before we could have room to judge whether those beautiful blossoms of sprightliness, generosity,

fity,

fity, and tenderness, which charmed us so much in her enticing little ways, would ever ripen into the expected fruit. My reason not only acquiesces in the justice of the dispensation, but my heart so far acknowledges its mercy, that could a wish bring my darling back to my bosom, I think I would not form that wish. She was so unusually strong and healthy, that, we dreamt not of fear till it became too late. She spoke to me in a clear, distinct voice, shewing tokens of the fondest affection, three hours before her death. Thus, you see, the stroke was very sudden. Then we had such delight in her; not only for her own sake, but for the great resemblance she bore to her dear departed brother, whose every look and gesture was restored in her. So that her death was just like losing him over again. It is also so melancholy to see the poor thing that remains, wandering like a ghost, and constantly bewailing her sister.

* * * * *

Things are far better as they are. I once thought nothing would have made me so happy as to renew in town some of my earliest

earliest attachments and former habits of life; but how are we governed by events! An incident, which to an indifferent person, would appear of no great moment in so large a family as ours, has entirely altered my views. I see nothing now so desirable as, by residing here, to ensure taking my final residence with those who were so dear to me in life. I have said a great deal too much on this subject; but you will forgive me for indulging my reflections at the expence of your patience.—There are few things that could gratify me more than to find you so cordially interested in poor Charlotte. I am not a little pleased to find your sentiments and mind, concerning her, coincide so entirely. Her integrity of heart, her sincerity, and general rectitude of intention, are such as, to one that knows her intimately, are sufficient to ensure esteem, and even affection, beyond all that shines, and all that pleases, in those, whom happier fortunes, and a more finished education, have set in a fairer point of view. I am very well satisfied to find that she is going to stay for some time at Mr. D.'s. - - - I hope she will
take

take particular care to please those who are so well worth pleasing. I conclude, from her thorough confidence in you, from whom no thought of her heart is concealed, that you know of a visitor whom she daily expects. This visitor is certainly an object of compassion. That attachment, from the beginning so singular and romantic, seems daily increasing. I have so very good an opinion of the person in question, and so very bad an opinion of the safety or stability of such premature engagements - - - - - What to judge or to determine, I am utterly at a loss. I leave her then entirely to your direction, who, with equal warmth of good will towards her, have more judgment, experience and knowledge of the world.

* * * * *

I have received Mr. M.'s friendly letter, and feel the full force of his judicious and affectionate consolation. The hopes of seeing you here, at no very distant period, please me, even now, when very few things indeed have power to interest

Your obliged and faithful, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Feb. 17, 1792.

DEAR MADAM,

ONCE more returned from the limits of that undiscovered country, on whose dim-seen confines our hopes and fears are continually hovering, I devote one of the first efforts of my pen to you, who are so well entitled to every mark of grateful attention on my part, on my own account, as well as that of others, who engross my tenderest cares, and occasion me perpetual anxiety. For, though I am satisfied that they are much happier and more attended to than they could be with me, even the scenes of gaiety and pleasure, that I know them to be engaged in, are a source of inquietude to my fond apprehensions. "Perfect love," we are told, "casteth out fear." That may be the case when it is fixed on the All-perfect Object, who is alone worthy to excite and engross it;

it; but when our weak human affections are engaged by beings as imperfect as ourselves, fear and doubt continually mingle with them. When my young travellers return to the cottage, their allotted home, it will require more than common reflection and solidity to reconcile them to still life, frugality, and homely habits; though after all, I sincerely believe it is the state most akin to safety and comfort.—I am sorry to find those mutable beings, who change their sentiments and opinions so often and so easily, never once think of changing for the right, or even for a better system. - - - - -

- - - - - The less one thinks of human depravity, the better; one can't mend it; and 'tis only being either sorry or angry to very little purpose.—Charlotte says, she has been at a ball lately, which concludes her public exhibitions for the season. I am glad of it; for, though I must own my vanity is much flattered by the admiration which her person and manners have excited, and that I am gratified by the pleasure she receives, my judgment and my fears militate against her growing familiar to the public eye. Her

situation is too peculiar and delicate, to make it safe for her to attract so much attention. This will not fail to turn the jealous and scrutinizing eye of female envy upon her. Public admiration is a thing that soon dies of itself. A person who might never have had a wish for it, will feel forlorn at its departure. Besides, a person admired solely for beauty, will be always considered as a mere pretty girl ; her merit will never be thought of. My young daughter, by the bye, has as much merit as any lady of her age can have ; for she is very quiet and never disobeys me. Having few good things to bestow on her, we resolved to begin with giving her a good name, and have called her Anne Ourry. Let me not be forgotten on the *Dune* ; and believe me incapable of forgetting its inhabitants.

LETTER XLVII.

TO MISS OURRY.

Laggan, April 2, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I KNOW it will give you concern to hear that my silence for most part of this winter, was owing to illness. This, though not dangerous or alarming, was of such a nature as to throw the most oppressive gloom upon my spirits. I am none of those querulous beings who delight in brooding over evils, and oppressing their friends with all that troubles them. That sanguine turn of mind which you early remarked in me, has accompanied me through all the vicissitudes of health and sickness, all the quick shifting scenes of joy and sorrow, that have occupied the intervening period. I have often, as now, waited months for an interval of health and cheerfulness, to visit an absent friend, with the breathings of a mind in some degree composed and cheerful. Since I

have set out so hopefully with egotism, I will e'en give you the detail of my winter's confinement, and have done with it. All my transactions, nay, my very ideas, are so blended and interwoven with the dear branches that sprout and depend from me, that you must extend the toleration of friendship beyond its usual bounds, before you can truly relish my correspondence. You must not only indulge egotism in the first person, but you must have patience with egotism once removed, and hear me speak of my children as diffusely as I do of myself. Did I ever tell you of another *daughter* I have, who, though not born to me, is as dear and has cost me much dearer, than any of the rest? This daughter of my affection is called Charlotte Grant; she is nearly related to Mr. G.; was left motherless in her tenth year. - - - - - I have not at present, I feel I have not, spirits or resolution to go through the detail I meant. Yet if I could, it would do more than amuse, it would deeply interest and affect you. When she found a temporary home in our family, I had the pleasure to observe, that though
in

in a great measure neglected and uncultivated, she possessed a strength of intellect, a purity of sentiment and rectitude of principle, that afforded the best foundation for the embellishments which instruction might add to the rich gifts of nature. It was evident that this disposition would richly reward the labour of any one who should by a little culture, unfold the beauties of a mind, which, though untainted with vice and undebased by folly, had been so clouded by seclusion, and so shut up by reserve, that it required some penetration to discover of what it was capable.

* * * * *

My very friends were all against me; they were sure my anxious tenderness for this amiable sufferer, and the trouble I should take about her, would be a fresh source of painful solicitude to a mind already enfeebled with many cares. But I was resolute. Why should I renew my own sorrows, by telling you what difficulties and embarrassments attended the outset of my plan, what weeding and pruning I had to go through, and how I sacrificed every thing to the one favourite

object of making this child of sorrow appear to the world that lovely and estimable object for which nature designed her. I will rather invite your gratulation, by telling you how amply my cares have been repaid, and how richly her warm gratitude, her rapid improvement, and the justice which even the selfish world now does to her distinguished merit, have recompensed me for all I have done and suffered. - - - - - She has spent the two last winters in town*, where she is very much admired and caressed. The other season she passes with us, and is as sedulous in her endeavours to share and soften the many cares incident to my large family, and bustling manner of life, as the most dutiful child could possibly be. I find her now a most pleasing and rational companion, possessed of genuine sentiment, without romantic extravagance. She joins to the open and generous spirit of youth, a depth and solidity of reflection, which is the natural result of early affliction in a strong and well principled mind. She is admired for beauty more by others than by me. But she confessedly excels in

* *The town*—throughout the western Highlands, means *Glasgow*.

grace and elegance. Her countenance is certainly most singularly interesting ; and her manner, her air, her figure, and her motions, have all a mingled softness and dignity peculiar to herself. — My eldest daughter lives constantly with my father and mother, who are very happy in their new establishment. She shews a taste for letters, and a retentive memory. Her temper is even and placid. I have her here just now, and propose sending her to town, where I hope she will not only derive benefit from the schools she is to attend, but from the society and example of a lady of genuine worth, an old and true friend of mine, with whom she is to reside.—By all that is sweet in sympathy, or sacred in friendship, I conjure you to write before your heart cools, after perusing this desultory scroll. Should my present indisposition terminate fatally, it will be the last instance of long tried love and truth. Mr. G. insists on being crowded in. Accept his regards, and believe I shall be to the last hour of recollection, yours, &c.

* * * * *

Yet could I invite you to share in the perfection of rural elegance ; could I send my carriage for you, &c. &c. with what eager importunity would I urge you ! You must allow I have been very modest on this subject ; the favour coming so entirely from your side, makes it far more pleasing to look forward to, than if I had urged you to take a journey so fatiguing, and share accommodation so unlike what you have been used to. The consciousness of all this has made me mention my very wishes on the subject with fear and trembling. - - - - One text more, and I have done on the subject. We all know him to be the man of wisdom, but you must also allow him to be a *man of feeling*, who said, “ Hope deferred makes the heart sick.”—You gratify me beyond expression by your ideas, so different from those of the rest of the world, and so consonant to my own, regarding the views and notions with which I ought to inspire my children. On a subject which thrills through the deepest recesses of the heart, and awakens all the ardour of enthusiasm, to find in a kindred bosom the image of our own reflections and sensations,

sensations, affords a pleasure like that of hearing unexpectedly the sweetest music in perfect unison with the awakened sensibility of the moment. Soon may you see those children whom I have been endeavouring to train to the exercise of humble and patient virtue. You will see, that, like, the Laplanders,

“ They love their mountains, and enjoy their storms;
No false desires, no pride-created wants,
Disturb the peaceful current of their time.”

* * * * *

Our manner of living here is in some degree patriarchal. The large family of artless primitive people we are obliged to keep about, and the number of our children, who look up to us as the only object of love and veneration, occasion our lives to be spent in alternate acts of power and beneficence. Now what more have kings, but trappings and pageantry! When shall I hear of your appearing at the bar of the national assembly, to claim the rights you inherit as representative of the eldest branch of your family? for so you seem entitled to do by their late liberal edicts. Pray has Miss Malliet caught

the Gallomania? Yet its infection spreads widely. Farewell, heartily! as the king says.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO MRS. SMITH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, Feb. 11, 1793-

MY DEAR FRIEND!

I am just recovering from an indisposition so severe, that it would have robbed you of a correspondent if it had continued much longer. This is a sickly season, even amidst these mountains, where the keen atmosphere is so often agitated with storms, as well as by the dashing torrents, that it seldom stagnates into impurity. This, with the temperance and exercise which wholesome poverty produces, is the reason that death confines his ravages to infancy and declining age. There are very few instances here, of people dying in early youth; and, when they do happen, they seem objects of general concern and speculation. Mr. G. had a
relation,

relation, a young lady remarkable for nothing but singular mildness, piety, and prudence. Having been from her earliest youth subject to nervous affections, she became last winter quite emaciated and enfeebled, and at last died of a mismanaged rose fever, like my sweet Petrina. Yet every one insisted that her death was caused by grief for the loss of her brother. Another young creature, who has languished all this winter with similar complaints, is pronounced to be dying of love, though no mortal can say of whom. Thus primitive and romantic are the notions of our mountaineers. — I am now to notify to you a removal, in which you will, for my sake, be interested : it is that of my father from Fort George to Glasgow, which you know was matter of doubtful speculation, but is now decided. I feel the increas'd distance very painfully ; yet there are many considerations, which at more leisure I will explain to you, that reconcile me to it. I have lived so long entirely for others, that self-denial becomes with me rather a habit than a virtue ; and whatever is propos'd or thought of, it is not my own gratification, but
the

the manner in which it affects the various branches of my individual self, that occurs first to me. I have likewise to inform you that Miss Ourry comes positively about the beginning of May. Glasgow is out of her way, and she will grudge every hour she is absent from us, after she enters Scotland. She cannot stand a Highland winter, and Miss Malliet will not be happy if she does not return at the appointed time. When that comes, I shall probably accompany her to Glasgow, and see my father's family, including some of my own, settled. I hope you do not think I had the confidence to urge my friend to come to such a place, and such humble accommodation. She invited herself most cordially, and I received her proffer'd visit with grateful joy; but I have most pathetically represented how like our *peat reek*, &c. are to the comforts of Quilca and Cavan, immortalized by Swift. Yet she is unalterable, and I rejoice thereat. The ancestors of this lady and her friend both left France, for conscience sake, on the repeal of the Edict of Nantz, and they have no doubt many relations there. Judge how
they

they must be affected by the state of that unhappy country, and what their feelings must be in consequence of the last fatal catastrophe. It was but last night we heard it. News reaches us but slowly. Would you think, after being so long engross'd by domestic cares and anxieties, and drinking so lately the bitter draught of private and particular sorrow, that I should weep for a king? I wonder at it myself; and yet I wept abundantly, and was disturbed and agitated all night. I am still under a dead weight of sadness: the recent wound of my heart, which is but skinned over, seeks only a pretence to bleed anew. Do you feel thus? Pray get the tragedy of Agis, and read it for my sake and that of the French King. I remember when I was very young, and felt deep impressions from what I read, I was charmed with the choruses in that tragedy. I am as usual haunted with an apposite quotation:

When Jove decrees a nation's doom,
He calls their *worthies* to the tomb.
Fearless they fall, immortal rise,
And claim the freedom of the skies.

He

He fell not as the warrior falls,
Whose breast defends his native walls ;
To treason Agis bow'd his head,
And by his guilty subjects bled.

I have altered one word, to make it the better apply to the benign Louis. I have observed in the history of all nations, that when the women became impudent and licentious, and the sacred bond of marriage was made light of, that nation's downfall was near. We are very consequential beings, believe me. The purity of female manners is the basis on which, morally speaking, all the order and virtue of society are founded. Who cares for his country but in consequence of first loving the relations who attach him to it ? And who can care much for parents, brothers, and children, where relationship is dubious ? It is an abominable state of society ; even setting the great cordial of life, the hope of futurity, out of the question ! May you and I never live to see our dear country tainted with this infectious depravity ! I am, in joy and sorrow, yours unalterably.

LETTER XLIX.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW,

Laggan, March 20, 1793.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE been for some days tortured with a most outrageous tooth-ach. I now snatch a lucid interval, which I fear will be but a short one, to enjoy and acknowledge the lively and sincere pleasure I feel from your intimation through Charlotte, I mean of your intention of coming in June. I hope your jaunt will be favoured with good weather, and that you will see the harsh features of nature around us softened into their mildest aspect. I flatter myself novelty will make you as partial to these wild and solitary scenes, as habit has made me. You shall have one of the warmest corners both in our cottage, and in our hearts. If you come while Miss Ourry stays, each of you, I am sure, will put up with a little crowding, to share these apartments,

ments, or rather compartments, with the other. If you set out so soon as I wish, and hope, I dare say you will get the start of her, and be first in possession. She was detained in London three weeks beyond her intention, settling the affairs of an old grand-uncle. That intricate piece of business is now, I hope, satisfactorily concluded. Not hearing of her this fortnight, I take for granted she has begun her journey. By letters from Edinburgh I find our friends there are very willing to do her the honours of the good town most completely. Their politeness, and the fatigues of the former journey, may perhaps detain her there for some days. Among the various obligations I owe to you, the interest I am told you take in this highly valued friend, is not the least. The affection that subsists between her and me is too old, and too mellow, for the little jealousies and monopolies of recent girlish attachments. It is like a deep rooted tree, which, far from requiring to be fenced or propped up, extends its shelter to younger plants around it. By loving each other so long and so well, our hearts are more fitted
to

to pay the warm tribute of esteem to merit wherever it exists. By reciprocal sympathy, we feel as if engaged for each other in debts of gratitude and kindness. Here you have a rhapsody, a simile, and I know not what. People, at my time of day, seldom deck out common objects with the vivid hues of enthusiasm. But you have only to account for this natural curiosity, of a latter spring in the imagination, by supposing that in the tooth-ach, as in the gout, the intervals of ease are distinguished by an uncommon flow of spirits. As I take it for granted you come rather with a pious intention to hermitize and contemplate, than with any view to amusement, I shall be in no pain for the sameness that awaits you here. Being a lover of nature, and a mother, perhaps it will afford you some pleasure to see a family of young creatures as happy as health, good nature, and perfect liberty, can make them; who never knew what it was to form an artificial wish, or to have a natural one ungratified, unless it were for a little gilt book, whose wondrous assemblage of rare portraitures had excited
their

their admiration. Your arrival will, I am sure, greatly revive Charlotte, who has mourned immoderately for the great loss we have all sustained in Mrs. Mac P., of R.* I am happy to hear Miss P. has recovered, and has a prospect of passing the summer so agreeably, with the worthy family at Andmore, of whom I have been taught to think very highly indeed.—Mr. G. joins in every good wish towards the dwellers on the Dune, and rejoices with me at the nearer prospect of seeing the lord of the said Dune

“Once more on the borders of the brawling brook.”

Believe me, my dear Madam, with warmest regard, &c. &c.

* Mrs. Macpherson, of Ralia, married to a near relation, an intimate friend, of the minister of Laggan. She was distinguished for beauty and understanding, and died about her thirtieth year, on the birth of her youngest son, leaving eleven children to lament her irreparable loss.

LETTER L.

TO MRS. BROWN, GLASGOW.

Laggan, July 23, 1793.

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN,

IF I had not been dying all winter, and half killed with fatigue all summer, in consequence of the number of things neglected which I was unable to overtake, it would have been unpardonable in me to have been thus long silent to you, on whose friendship I set so great and just a value. Mrs. Smith says you had a sick child in your arms. This, I take for granted, was William, whom I know to be as fine a child as M— described. I think if there was any danger, she would have mentioned it more seriously.—I am charmed to hear you are so well pleased with —, nor do I much wonder at it, considering that there are many *youisms* about her; though she wants that spirit of accuracy by which you were so early distinguished. She is active, lively,

lively, and has an ardent, generous disposition. This does not evaporate in profession, but labours rather to serve, than to please. For all your partiality, I still think she has many of the awkwardnesses which distinguish an unbred girl. Yet I willingly allow, it is not quite a vulgar awkwardness; for, as I formerly observed to you, where there is mind, there is always, to a certain degree, manner. Miss Ourry and I used to call that embarrassment which results from much feeling and spirit, joined with little usage of the world, elegant awkwardness. I believe a certain portion of indifference must go towards the composition of perfect fashionable ease. You must be fully satisfied with yourself, before you can be fully convinced that every one else is satisfied with you, and the contrary idea is painful and embarrassing.—I give you joy of the nephew or niece you are about to acquire. Your sister is astonished at my calling this a joyful event. No wonder, considering how I am worried and worn out with such acquisitions. Yet people here, though they should be at the utmost loss how to support
their

their children, still continue to rejoice at every addition, and consider the loss of offspring as the greatest misfortune that can possibly befall a family. Those who live in towns and highly civilized societies, where such numberless little somethings become necessary to make up the sum total of felicity, have no idea how strong the great simple outlines of what constitutes happiness in a state of nature, are drawn on the untutored heart. Without reasoning or reflecting, such hearts find the strongest and most pleasurable emotions excited, merely by the exercise of tender and laudable affections. Strangers to false refinement, and incapable from want of cultivation, of that exalted enjoyment that arises from sentimental attachment, grounded on intellectual excellence, the ties of nature, the "charities" of life, are the great sources of their comfort, and sweeten all their hardships. Since bad seasons, and new modes of farming, have impoverished the peasantry, I do not think there is a poor tenant in this parish, but what is in some measure supported by his children. And there is no instance of one failing in this tender retribution. Brought
up

up with generous sentiments, but frugal and self-denying habits, they are not like the children of luxury and indulgence, whose desires go always beyond their acquisitions, and leave nothing for bounty or for gratitude. Neither are they like the groveling offspring of callous vulgarity, who are taught to glean and hoard and think for self only. I have rambled as usual. But I believe I at first meant to remark how insensibly, in course of time, we in some degree adopt the habits and prejudices of those about us, even while we pity their ignorance, and fancy ourselves more enlightened. For my part, I have learnt to rejoice at the birth of people's fifteenth child, and to listen to stories of apparitions and predictions with as much indulgence, though with less credulity, than N. B. Halhed exercises towards Brothers. For instance, t'other day, my dairy-maid, who has been above seven years in the house, and is a pious maiden, and a perfect treasury of local and traditionary anecdote, told me a story, which I am going to translate literally for your behoof, and which I was forced to hear with a face of belief, for fear

of being thought an infidel. I must premise that our dairy-maids always speak very wisely to the cows, though it is only in rare instances, like this, that the cows answer them. “Yesterday fortnight, (I am sure it is very true, for I saw a man with these eyes that saw the dairy-maid), the minister of Mouline in Athol, you know—well, his dairy-maid went into the byre, and put out all the cows but one, who lay down and would not move: ‘Get up,’ says the dairy-maid; ‘I won’t get up,’ says the cow;—‘but you shall,’ replied the damsel, a little startled. ‘Go to your master, and bid him come here,’ says the cow. So the girl went, and her master came to the byre. ‘Get up,’ said he to the cow; ‘no, I won’t,’ said she, ‘I want to speak to you.’ ‘Say on,’ said her master, ‘since you are permitted.’ The cow began; ‘Expect a summer of famine, a harvest of blood, and a winter of tears.’ So then the cow went about her business.”—Now this fine story gains ample credit, and it would be thought impiety to doubt it. Could you have believed, that there existed manners and opinions so primitive as those which

are still preserved in the parish of Laggan? Will you condemn or laugh at my singularity, when I tell you, that I am so wearied and disgusted with seeing ignorant, conceited, and irreligious coxcombs, form absurd pretensions to reason and philosophy (by affecting to despise all that Newton, Boyle, Locke, and other lights and ornaments of their species believed, and all that inspiration and piety have taught), that I begin to think my poor Anne's credulity more tolerable than such cold hearted scepticism? I would, at any rate, sooner listen to the sad predictions of either Achilles' horse, or the minister of Mouline's cow, than to many "dreamers of gay dreams," who imagine themselves "wit's oracles." No doubt the true line lies between credulity and scepticism; but if I quit that line, let me go where I am led by the imagination and the heart. Did you but know how very, very busy I have been all day, having twenty people at work, cutting our winter fuel in the moss, and only one servant at home to provide food for all these, with little aid, you would think my writing all this stuff, now that

that every body is asleep, as great an exertion as that of the minister of Mouline's cow. I bid you drowsily Adieu, for the first lark is warning me to bed, like an owl as I am.

LETTER LI.

TO MISS OURRY.

Glasgow, Jan. 2, 1794.

I AM far from imputing neglect to you after your two spirited efforts from F——bridge and London, and the other very pleasing testimonies of attention to my dear friends at Laggan, of which I heard as they passed through the town. After this elegant exordium, with which you must be greatly edified, it remains with me to account for staying so long here, contrary to my mate's tender injunction and your entreaties. First, then, my father has been very ill, and had I been much inclined, which I honestly confess was not the case, I could not, till now, have thought of returning. Then I have not put

B. to school, or done half what I meant.—I have seen Mary Woolstonecroft's book, which is so run after here, that there is no keeping it long enough to read it leisurely, though one had leisure. It has produced no other conviction in my mind, but that of the author's possessing considerable abilities, and greatly misapplying them. To refute her arguments would be to write another and a larger book; for there is more pains and skill required to refute ill-founded assertions, than to make them. Nothing can be more specious and plausible, for nothing can delight Misses more than to tell them they are as wise as their masters. Though, after all, they will in every emergency be like Trinculo in the storm, when he crept under Caliban's gaberdine for shelter. I consider this work as every way dangerous. First, because the author to considerable powers adds feeling, and I dare say a degree of rectitude of intention. She speaks from conviction on her own part, and has completely imposed on herself before she attempts to mislead you. Then because she speaks in such a strain of seeming piety, and quotes Scripture in a manner

manner so applicable and emphatic, that you are thrown off your guard, and surprised into partial acquiescence, before you observe that the deduction to be drawn from her position, is in direct contradiction, not only to Scripture, reason, the common sense and universal custom of the world, but even to parts of her own system, and many of her own assertions. Some women of a good capacity, with the advantage of superior education, have no doubt acted and reasoned more consequentially and judiciously than some weak men; but, take the whole sex through, this seldom happens; and were the principal departments, where strong thinking and acting become necessary, allotted to females, it would evidently happen so much the more rarely, that there would be little room for triumph, and less for inverting the common order of things, to give room for the exercise of female intellect. It sometimes happens, especially in our climate, that a gloomy, dismal winter day, when all without and within is comfortless, is succeeded by a beautiful starlight evening, embellished with aurora borealis,

as quick, as splendid, and as transient, as the play of the brightest female imagination : of these bad days succeeded by good nights, there may, perhaps, be a dozen in the season. What should we think of a projector, that, to enjoy the benefit of the one, and avoid the oppression of the other, should insist that people should sleep all day and work all night, the whole year round? I think the great advantage that women, taken upon the whole, have over men, is, that they are more gentle, benevolent, and virtuous. Much of this only superiority they owe to living secure and protected in the shade. Let them loose, to go impudently through all the jostling paths of politics and business, and they will encounter all the corruptions that men are subject to, without the same powers either of resistance or recovery; for, the delicacy of the female mind is like other fine things; in attempting to rub out a stain, you destroy the texture. I am sorry to tell you, *in a very low whisper*, that this intellectual equality that the Misses make such a rout about, has no real existence. The ladies of talents would not feel
so

so overburdened, and at a loss what to do with them, if they were not quite out of the common course of things. Mary W. and some others put me in mind of a kitten we had last winter, who, finding a small tea-pot without a lid, put in its head, but not finding it so easy to take it out again, she broke the pot in the struggle; her head, however, still remained in the opening, and she retained as much of the broken utensil round her neck, as made a kind of moveable pillory. She ran about the house in alarm and astonishment. She did not know what was the matter; felt she was not like other cats, but had acquired a greater power of making disturbance, which she was resolved to use to the very utmost, and so would neither be quiet herself, or suffer any one else to remain so. I leave the application to you. Our powers are extremely well adapted to the purposes for which they are intended; and if now and then faculties of a superior order are bestowed upon us, they too are, no doubt, given for good and wise purposes, and we have as good a right to use them as a linnet has to sing; but this so seldom hap-

pens, and it is of so little consequence whether it happens or not, that there is no reason why Scripture, custom, and nature, should be set at defiance, to erect up a system of education for qualifying women to act parts which providence has not assigned to the sex. Where a woman has those superior powers of mind to which we give the name of genius, she will exert them under all disadvantages : Jean Jacques says truly, genius will educate itself, and, like flame, burst through all obstructions. Certainly in the present state of society, when knowledge is so very attainable, a strong and vigorous intellect may soon find its level. Creating hot-beds for female genius, is merely another way of forcing exotic productions, which, after all, are mere luxuries, indifferent in their kind, and cost more time and expence than they are worth. As to superiority of mental powers, Mrs. W. is doubtless the empress of female philosophers ; yet what has she done for philosophy, or for the sex, but closed a ditch, to open a gulf ? There is a degree of boldness in her conceptions, and masculine energy

energy in her style, that is very imposing. There is a gloomy grandeur in her imagination, while she explores the regions of intellect without chart or compass, which gives one the idea of genius wandering through chaos. Yet her continual self-contradiction, and quoting, with such seeming reverence, that very Scripture, one of whose first and clearest principles it is the avowed object of her work to controvert; her considering religion as an adjunct to virtue, so far and no farther than suits her hypothesis; the taking up and laying down of revelation with the same facility; make me think of a line in an old song,

“ One foot on sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.”

What, as I said before, has she done? shewed us all the miseries of our condition; robbed us of the only sure remedy for the evils of life, the sure hope of a blessed immortality; and left for our comfort the rudiments of crude, unfinished systems, that crumble to nothing whenever you begin to examine the materials of which they are constructed. Come, let us for a moment
shut

shut the Bible, and listen to Mary. Let us suppose intellect equally divided between the sexes. We may deceive the understanding, but it would be a very bold effort of sophistry to attempt to impose on the senses. We know too well that our imaginations are more awake, our senses more acute, our feelings more delicate, than those of our *tyrants*. Say, then, we are otherwise equal. These qualities or defects would still leave the advantage on their side; we should much oftener resolve and act, before we called reason to counsel, than they would. Besides, I foresee that the balance will go in the old fashioned way at last, if Mary carries her point. When the desired revolution is brought about, will not the most sanguine advocates of equality be satisfied, in the first national council, with having an equal number of each sex elected? Now I foresee that when this is done, (as girls, or very old women, will not be eligible for the duties of legislation, and mothers have certainly a greater stake in the commonwealth) a third of the female members will be lying-in, recovering, or nursing;

nursing; for you can never admit the idea of a female philosopher giving her child to be nursed. Whatever other changes may be found proper, I hope they will retain the wool-sacks in the upper house, and add some more. The mem-bresses of course will bring their infants into the house; this will interrupt no debate; for children that suck in philosophy with their milk, will not cry like the vulgar brats under the old regime, but they may possibly sleep during a long debate, and then the wool-sacks will be very convenient to lay them upon. There is no end either of reasoning or ridicule on this truly ridiculous subject. If the powers of a very superior female mind prove so inadequate to its own purposes, when thus absurdly exerted, what will become of those who adopt her vanity and scepticism, without her knowledge and genius to support them? To conclude; I see 'tis a great custom now for people to dabble in scepticism and speculative impiety, keeping all the while a slight hold of their original principles, that they may return when they please, as if

thus

thus far and no farther belonged to finite natures. Yet these same people would be very unhappy, if they saw their young children going out of their depth into a current trusting to a slight hold of a twig on the brink ; though the worst that could happen in this latter case were only drowning. In fact, the Bible is or is not the charter of our salvation. It is necessary, both for our peace of mind and consistency of conduct, that we should either believe or not believe it. The nature of the subject admits no wavering ; it is all true, or all false. Let us then seriously regard the most important object that can ever be presented to our view. These truths must be either wedded or renounced. If we mingle daring innovations and unwarranted practices with a feeble and dubious belief, haunted with pungent remorse or gloomy uncertainty, we shall not even enjoy the fleeting day that is passing from us. Let us then grasp hard our principles, or let them go. As the reformers manage, they have the fears without the hopes that religion inspires. Let us at any rate, in these important concerns, be guided
by

by the common sense that directs us in ordinary bargains. Let us examine well what we are to get, before we part with what we have. My poor brains could never support the rotation of opinions which seems to delight some people here. They remind me of Hotspur, when he talks of living in a windmill. What a pleasing transition I am about to make from those who believe too little, to those who believe rather too much. With what delight and reverence I shall listen to dear Moome's *awe compelling tales*, after all this farrago. Adieu! may you reap the fruits of steady principle and consistent conduct, both here and hereafter. Farewell, kindly.

LETTER LII.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, July 2, 1794.

DEAR MADAM,

WE begin now to be very impatient for the confirmation of the glad tidings of your coming

coming north. It was wrong to mention it unless you mean to carry it through ; the prospect having so much elated the young family. B. is particularly so ; even her meek spirit is occupied in premeditating chicken slaughter, for the poultry are in her department ; and then she is so engrossed with considering what fruits and vegetables will be in season. My principal fear is, that our stock of good weather will be exhausted before you arrive ; for, as the man says of his Italian wash balls, we have really had Italian sunshine for six weeks past, which, with the addition of tranquillity, and an easy, regular progression of family and farming, has been a great source of enjoyment to us : so that, were it not for the French and the caterpillars, we should be quite happy ; but the former disturb our peace, and the latter destroy our gooseberries. I should not speak plurally, for my sovereign is not so much the sport of petty contingencies. You see thus, in the midst of innocent pleasures and laudable employments, I remain a perturbed example of that great moral truth, that there is no unmixed felicity here ;—at least

least out of Plymouth, for there the orb of joy shines round and bright in the beatified dwelling of Capt. F—r and his mate, without being obscured by clouds, or waning into diminution. In short, Mrs. F. seems highly pleased with the change of state, and delighted with the character of her mate. No wonder, if he be all she thinks ; and I do not doubt of her judgment or veracity in this or any other instance. Such mildness of disposition, rectitude of principle, and singular delicacy of sentiment, as she ascribes to him, must enchant a person of her taste and feeling. The porch, like our own, is often the most decorated and pleasant part of the dwelling ; yet I flatter myself, my dear friend's case will not confirm this observation, but that she will find herself just as happy at the close of this century. Her great fear at present is, that her lord should be called out to Channel service. But I hope, now that Lord Howe has so completely established our superiority there, it will no longer be accounted a post of danger. You never tell me a word about your son John, which you ought to do,

do, in common charity, to afford me a pretext for saying something about mine, When did you hear from him, from St. Helena?— I have used all means to get Charlotte home for near a month past, and am now like to succeed.

* * * * *

I see Robespierre too, has been lately the object of a young lady's enthusiasm. I hope he will meet some enthusiast soon, who will send him on a journey he is little prepared for.—Mr. G. is still ideal chaplain, for the choice is not declared; but we think the same appointment in an old regiment would be better. With kind love to you all, in which the pastor joins,

I am very gratefully Yours.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.





UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 982 050 7

SO
IVERN PN BR
LOS ANGELES
CALIF.

CHC
ORND

Unive
So
L